「ようこそ、婚殿」

理想の七色生活1

善治郎は思わずマジマジと、
目の前に立つ美女を観察する。

理想の七王生活 1

「中空に散らばる
見えざる水は、
この指先に集い、
球形をとれ」

オクタビアは右手の人指し指を立て、
魔法を発動させた。

善治郎とアウラの結婚式は無事、執り行われた。
新婚初夜である。
その夜——

「あ、アウラ……」「センジロウ」

理想の上七生活

1

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Prologue: The first two consecutive holidays after half a year, at a different world

“I welcome you, my future husband. First off, I offer you my apologies for my impolite behaviour of bringing you here into this world, into this palace of mine without any notice. I ask you to forgive me.”

The captivating beautiful woman with red hair and light brown skin called out to him with a sweet smile.

“…….Huh?”

The man the woman called out to— Yamai Zenjirou raised a dumbfounded voice without comprehending the situation at all.

Just what was going on?

If Zenjirou’s memory proved him right, today should be Saturday, the first holiday after half a year, where he didn’t have to work.

Since he could rarely enjoy two consecutive holidays after becoming a working adult, he knowingly woke up at the same time like during the week and took a drive with his bicycle to the nearby convenience store to fetch some breakfast. He properly remembered it up to this point.

And as a matter of fact, Zenjirou’s bottom was placed on the saddle of the bicycle even now and his hands were holding the handle.

Stuffed into the front basket were the heated up “Fried Chicken Lunchbox” and a 500ml pet bottle with green tea.

“…”

To confirm his sanity, Zenjirou, still sitting on the bicycle, reached out his right hand and tried touching the lunch box and tea in the basket.

The lunch box was warm and the tea cold. This actual sensation made this unlikely to be a dream. While on the topic, the lunch box hadn’t cooled down and the tea hadn’t become lukewarm, so it was unlikely too that he lost consciousness and was taken somewhere far away without knowing it.

However, if that was the case, then why did he have to be smiled at by a stunning beauty in a dim and stony room like this when he was pedalling his bicycle through the Kantou area in Japan just a moment ago?

Zenjirou inadvertently peered hard at the beautiful woman standing in front of him.

She must be the in the middle of her 20s? Though for that she showed an unusual appeal and composure, so she might be a bit older than that. At least she didn’t look younger than the twenty-four old Zenjirou.

She wore a slinky red dress with a V-neck around her chest, but her figure was in no way inferior to this elegant dress.

The cleavage peeking out from the V-neck prided itself with a size that was worth being called enormous, one size above huge, and her slender waist was inversely proportional to it. A long skirt covered the line down from her waist, so he couldn’t see it, but at this rate there was much to anticipate.

Her figure with broad and somewhat square shoulders would turn off some men with certain tastes, but at least to Zenjirou, she had plenty of womanly charm.

In fact, her beauty was so perfect for Zenjirou’s liking that he would scream “I have loved you ever since I was born!” if he had the assurance that the current situation was a dream.

“Your Highness, we do not have much time. The ‘summoning’ succeeded, so you should start explaining as soon as possible.”

While Zenjirou was captivated by the red-haired beauty, a young man in a leather armour standing to the right of the woman, advised her so with a monotone voice.

On this remark, Zenjirou realized for the first time that other people were in this stony room besides him and the beautiful woman.

When he hastily looked around, he could see a total of four men that held spears and were clad in the same leather armour like the man, who spoke, standing still around him at all sides.

Moreover, on the woman's left stood an old man in a purple robe with a long staff.

The reason Zenjirou didn't notice these people around him wasn't because he was particularly short-sighted.

The red-haired beauty in front of him had just that much of a presence. On a closer look, the armed guards had an impressive physique and their features were rather dignified as well, but next to the beautiful woman, they just looked like "extras to the Queen", even when regarded with favour.

Guess they called this "charisma"? While Zenjirou thought about that, the woman nodded short and looked straight into his eyes, beginning to talk.

"I know. Well then, my future husband. I am sure you have no idea why you are here. May I explain and warrant the chain of events?"

"Eh? Ah, y- yes."

Zenjirou shook his head vertically, overwhelmed by her smile rather than comprehending her words.

On his obedient reply, the woman brightened her smile.

"Good. Now then, we cannot have a leisurely talk in this dim place, so we should move on. Please follow me."

The woman said so, then turned around with her red hair flattering greatly and walked away.

"We will take care of this vehicle of yours."

"Ah, o- okay. Thanks."

Without having the slightest clue, Zenjirou got off his bicycle and somewhat habitual flipped down the kickstand, locking the bicycle with the key from his trousers. Then he quickly went after the woman, who looked back at him at the entrance.

* * *

Passing through a long hallway with stony walls and floor, Zenjirou was guided to a broad room into which the bright sun rays shone. Two long leather couches were set up across each other with a big wooden table in-between.

Prompted by the woman, Zenjirou sat down on the couch.

After waiting for him to sit down, the woman sat down across of him and slowly opened her mouth.

"Let us start with a self-introduction. My name is Aura Carpa. I want you to call me Aura."

"Ah, okay, Aura-san it is. I'm, no, my name is Yamai Zenjirou. Yamai is my last name and Zenjirou my first name."

"Okay. Then my I call you Zenjirou-dono?"

"Yes, by all means."

Hearing his affirmation, the woman— Aura smiled happily.

"Thank you, Zenjirou-dono. Well then, I will now simply explain the chain of events of what happened to you. To you it might sound like an absurd action that you cannot agree with, but do know that is not impossible to undo the current situation.

Should it go against your will, I will make everything like before. That I promise you. So could you please listen to my whole story in silence for now?"

Aura made a rather unsettling prologue with a sudden serious expression, whereupon Zenjirou got a bad feeling, but after pondering for a bit, he nodded in the end.

At any rate, he had no clue in what kind of situation he was right now anyway. Altogether, before showing any anger like Aura had mentioned, he could not get angry over a situation he didn't understand.

One filed a complaint after hearing the whole standpoint from the other party.

"I understand. Please let me hear it."

On Zenjirou's answer, Aura made a sigh of relief and after a deep breath, she started to talk.

"Thank you. Then I will start explaining from the fundamentally question of what this place is. We are in the Carpa Kingdom, which is located in the west of the Landlion continent— also known as the 'South Continent'. And this is a room in the palace, which is the center of the capital of Carpa. I am sure all these names do not mean anything to you.

Well, naturally, since this is a different world from the one you were born and lived in. A so called 'Parallel Universe'."

"…Huh? Parallel universe…?"

Still not comprehending the situation, Zenjirou tilted his head, whereas Aura gave him a wry look and continued to explain.

Aura's explanation went on for a long time. Or more precisely he couldn't tell at all, but when he looked at his wristwatch midway once, it was half past seven and right now with the explanation all done with, the needle of the clock had turned to the eight.

Somehow gleaning Aura's explanation that had lasted for at least thirty minutes, but more likely one hour, into his head, Zenjirou said in a dazed tone.

"Ehm… In other words, this is a country called the Carpa Kingdom in a different world and you, Aura-sama, are the Queen of it, correct? Furthermore, magic exists in this world and you used a 'Space-time magic' that's only practicable by the royal family, to summon me into this world."

"Yes, that is correct. It seems you finally understand. Ah, also, you do not need to use respective speech with me. Just casually call me Aura.

Certainly, I am the Queen of this country, but you are not a citizen of my country. Or rather, I dragged you into this world without any notice, so you are nothing but a victim. At the present time there stands no reason for you to accord me your courtesy."

Saying so, Aura remorsefully lowered her head a bit.

"O- Okay, I understand, Aura…-san."

Zenjirou hastily averted his eyes from Aura's voluminous cleavage he got a deep insight on due to her bow.

The reason that this simple explanation took nearly one hour was that Zenjirou hadn't really tried to understand her words.

Well, understandable. There was no way that a typical Japanese from the modern age would take a strange occurrence like "being summoned to a different world" as reality.

Aura persistently kept explaining to Zenjirou, who was quite doubtful about this being a different world, without getting irritated. As a result, Zenjirou finally admitted the fact that he was in a different world right now.

The deciding factor was the "Raptorial Dragon" ridden by a "Knight" that came to the window on Aura's order.

This ridiculously large lizard with twice the size of a horse, had stuck his long neck through the window from the garden and licked Zenjirou's cheek.

That lukewarm and real sensation ridded Zenjirou of any possibilities that this was a dream or some large-scaled prank.

Zenjirou spoke out a question while wiping the "Raptorial Dragon's" grass-stinking saliva from his wet cheek with the sleeve of his T-shirt.

"What I don't get is why you would summon something like me."

Zenjirou had no special skills and was just your average Japanese male. At least he didn't consider himself valuable enough to purposefully be summoned by a Queen to a different world through magic.

"You're going to make me do something, right? Not to brag about it, but I can't swing a sword, nor can I use any magic."

To discourage her from it, Zenjirou said so with a timid tone, whereas Aura smiled sweetly and shook her head.

"No, I have not the slightest intentions to make you do something so dangerous. This western part of the South Continent was engulfed in a long war for generations, but now it has relatively calmed down. What I want to ask of you is just one thing: To become my 'spouse'."

"Spouse?"

Zenjirou didn't understand the meaning behind Aura's words right away, so he tilted his head and asked back.

"Yes, my spouse. Or husband, if you prefer it that way. I am asking you to marry me."

Spouse, husband, marry. After being told that much, even Zenjirou's currently slow brain comprehended it.

"Ueeeh!? M- Ma- Marry!? Why!?"

Understanding Aura's request, Zenjirou jumped up from the couch.

As she predicted his reaction to some extent, Aura laughed a bit, then continued to explain with a calm voice.

"This will take a while, but please hear me out first. Like I said before, my country fought a long war. Fortunately our country managed to be on the winning side in this war, but the price was high.

We lost citizens, the aristocrats were displeased and the royal family died out, except for me.

Blessedly there is hope for rehabilitation in some way thanks to the support the citizens and aristocrats gave the country afterwards, but the problem is the royal family. With me as the last member of the royal family, our bloodline could end any time, so you could call my marriage an absolute duty.

However, the 'Carpa' lineage inherits the unique 'Space-time' magic in it's blood. Not just anyone will do for a marriage partner. To bequeath the magic onto the next generation, a companion that inherited the same Carpa blood would be most desirable."

"Hah, I see…"

Not quite comprehending it, Zenjirou gave an agreeable response on reflex.

The custom of taking a partner with a blood-relation as close as possible to keep the royal lineage pure-blooded was often practised on earth in the past too.

All the more was it natural to value a pure-bred in this world, where it came with the practical benefit of an inherited "bloodline magic".

However, he understood the current situation even less then.

"But if that's the case, why me? I'm just an earthling that doesn't even know the runes for magic."

Aura smiled meaningful upon Zenjirou's frank question and answered.

"The reason is quite simple: Because you clearly inherited the blood of the 'Carpa' family."

"…….Huh?"

This time for sure Zenjirou didn't understand the meaning behind Aura's words for a while. "You inherited the blood of the Carpa family." It took him more than ten seconds to comprehend the meaning behind these words. Zenjirou flapped his hand in front of his face like a broken doll and denied Aura's words.

"No, no. What's up with that!? Not possible, never!"

Zenjirou denied it with all his might, but Aura continued her speech without paying mind to it.

"It dates back to five generations before me, roughly 150 years ago.

It was erased from the royal documents, so I am not so sure myself, but I heard that it all started with the first prince of our country at that time, who fell in love with a woman that he originally should not marry.

It is both said that this woman was just a commoner or the princess of a rival country, but the truth is unknown.

Anyway, the prince fell in love with a person that he would never be allowed to marry since he was in line to succeed the throne and he did not even listened to his parents, the King and Queen.

Since they were not allowed to be together in 'this world', the two lovers decided to go into a 'different world' and be together there. Quite romantic."

Being told that much, Zenjirou could guess what Aura wanted to say.

"Do you want to say that… I'm their descendent?"

"Exactly."

Zenjirou asked back dumbfounded, whereas Aura affirmed it without breaking her smile.

"I did not used the summoning magic just like that. I specified it, so that it inevitable would summon a man that inherited the blood of the Carpa family. As a result, you appeared, Zenjirou-dono.

Thus there is no doubt that you are their descendent."

Even while Zenjirou affirmed Aura's definitely stated words in a part of his brain, he still put out another objection.

"That can't be. No, even if it's true, it's five generations ago, you know!? That means he would be my, ehm… great-great-great-grandfather? So I inherited just a tiny bit?"

Aura nodded shortly to these words from Zenjirou once, then answered with a firm tone.

"Yes and to be honest, I was prepared for that too. However, to my surprise, you have inherited it quite strongly. It is not as strong as a direct descendent, but on the level of a branch family's head and so much that we can hope for you to use the 'Space-time magic' yourself with some training."

"Y- You can even tell that?"

Aura declared with a serious expression, whereas Zenjirou inquired while relocating his seating position backwards wincing.

"I can. I might not be able to say if you inherited the 'royal' blood or not, but I can confirm the latent magic power in someone on sight. Zenjirou-dono, your magic power is a semi-royal class.

The fact that my summoning magic reacted to you means that you have the blood of the 'Carpa Family' without doubt, and judging by your magic power, I conjecture that your inherited blood is quite strong too. This must be what they call a lucky surprise.

It is as if they purposefully repeated consanguineous marriages in the other world to preserve the bloodline."

On Aura's words, Zenjirou suddenly recalled a certain fact.

"Oh, right! Now that I think about it, it's related… I guess?"

"Zenjirou-dono? Do you have something in mind?"

Aura asked with her head tilted, whereas Zenjirou answered while pondering a bit.

"Ah, yes. Actually, I come from an isolated rural village with a long history. From way back, only one or two people per generation married someone from outside the village."

Zenjirou had been tired of the isolated and thus unchanging country side, so he enrolled in an university in the Kantou area, found a job there and started his life in the city.

Come to think of it, most people of the village, starting with his parents, who died in a traffic accident when he was in middle school, had rather dark skin and reddish hair for a Japanese.

As a matter of fact, for a Japanese man, Zenjirou too had rather darkish skin and reddish-brown to black hair.

On his words, Aura placed her hand onto her chin and nodded as to consent.

“Indeed. So as a result, that isolated village prevented the royal blood from thinning down in the other world.”

“Yes, if you take it as that, it fits the story.”

(Seriously? Actually I’m not a genuine Japanese, but are partly a person from a different world? I never heard anything about this!?)

Yes, it fit the story. It matched. Zenjirou mentally fell into a abysmally panic while showing a stiff smile on the surface.

Unexpectedly getting to know his ancestor’s secret, he turned pale, whereas Aura showed a happy smile and drew closer.

“You are indeed the companion I seek. What do you say, Zenjirou-dono? You must be confused by the sudden story, but would you seriously consider choosing the path of marrying me and living in this world?”

Aura put on a serious expression and broached like that, whereas Zenjirou pondered with a wee bit composed expression.

Marrying the woman in front of him. That in itself was by no means a bad thing. As described earlier, Aura’s appearance was a perfect match to Zenjirou’s taste and judging by their conversation, her nature didn’t seem bad either.

That said, she was a Queen and conducting herself accordingly, so he mustn’t forget that it was dangerous to extrapolate her nature from just her behaviour so far.

However, the more pressing problem was that it wasn’t “Aura marrying into his family”, but “him marrying into her family”.

The moment he accepted this proposal, Zenjirou would say good-bye to earth. No matter how much of the ideal woman she was to him, when he had to give up everything like his work, friends or amusements and cuisines, which could only be enjoyed on earth, in exchange for it, then he just couldn’t make a decision.

Also, with his brain slowed down by the thought of “Is this a dream?“, Zenjirou couldn’t reply to this matter right away.

After pondering about all that, he suddenly realized that he left out an important matter.

“Uh- Uhm, I’m already here and all, but what if, and I mean just hypothetically, what happens if I turn down your proposal?”

It was obvious at a first glance what he feared by seeing his face colour while he timidly asked so.

To reassure the pale man in front of her, Aura answered with a diligent smile.

“In that case, I will naturally take responsibility and return you to your own world with the ‘Deport Magic’. I told you at the beginning, remember? ‘Should it go against your will, I will make everything like before.’

As things stand, I already dragged you into this world without any notice. I have the discretion to reverse everything in case that you decline. Please be at ease and come up with an answer as your heart dictates you.”

“Ah, i- is that so…”

On Aura’s answers, Zenjirou made a deflated sigh of relief.

When he leaned back into the sofa, his T-shirt stuck to his back nastily. Apparently his back had become drenched by a cold sweat without his notice.

In a lot of cases of “summoning to a different world” in novels or manga, you could be summoned, but not returned, so the summoned person was forced to live in the different world against his will, but seemingly the reality Zenjirou confronted here wasn’t that unreasonable.

At any rate, it was fortunate that he could be returned. Upon hearing that, Zenjirou, who was about to blow up, regained a bit of his composure.

“At any rate, I plan to return you to your world once too if you should accept my offer. When you are going to part with your original world, I am sure you have people you want to say farewell to. The usage of the summoning and deport magic depends on the constellation of the stars, so I cannot use it freely, but much to our luck, the current constellation will last till tomorrow.

Moreover, the stars will be in position for a summoning again in one month's time.

In other words, if you decline my offer, I will send you back home and everything will be over. If you accept it, I will let you return temporarily tomorrow and summon you again in month."

"Hoh, it can be used that frequently?"

Zenjirou made an easy-going observation, whereas Aura shook her head with a wry smile.

"No, we are just blessed with a special star constellation. In fact, if we let the chance next month go by, we will have to wait thirty years for the next. There is no need to be overly worried, but we cannot take it too optimistic."

"Geh, no way, thirty years?"

On Aura's answer, Zenjirou inadvertently forgot his respective speech and leaked his natural voice.

Thirty years was certainly too long. If he were to accept this marriage proposal, he would have to say good-bye to earth for good without doubt.

But knowing that he would be returned to his world tomorrow if he declined, Zenjirou's mental condition made a considerable change for the better compared to before.

A person's mentality was a mysterious thing, since it thought "I want to go home at all cost" if told "You can never go back", yet when told "You can go back if you want", it thought "I don't really need to go back, do I?".

(If everything Aura-san says is actually true, then it's quite the attractive story. To begin with, I don't have started an own family, nor do I have a lover. As for my job… Well, I was doing fine in it, but I'm not really attached to a job with around 150 work hours plus overtime on a monthly average.)

Thinking back on it, today was his first day off on a Saturday after half a year.

Coming home after midnight on a weekday was the norm. Saturday was in principle a workday. He even worked on three Sundays per month. It was a salvation that he was at least compensated the exact hours of overtime without deception, but he had no free time in his days to spend that money.

Even when he came home, he had not even the energy left to cook himself and his dinner on a weekday was always either a lunchbox from the convenience store or a meal at a restaurant. Now that he was thinking about it, hadn't it been half a year, since he talked to a woman outside of work or shopping?

(After some thought, I'm really not attached to my life on earth…)

His original world. No lover and every day full of work.

This world. Marriage with a hot babe.

When he compared it over again, wasn't this proposal a so-called "godsend" for Zenjirou?

He thought about that for a moment, but his mentality, out of control from his original timidity, put a stop to it.

(No, no, wait. Even if everything so far is true, I still haven't heard about one factor. Aura-san's a Queen, right? There's no way I would get to sit back and do nothing after marrying a Queen.)

The royal family members were born to be politicians. In novel or manga, Princes often lived a rosy life, but they were nothing but an exception and those that took their royal obligations serious were so busy all the time that you pitied them.

Instead of such a lifestyle, it would be easier to be a black suit salary man in his original world.

Zenjirou took a few short deep breathes covertly, calming down his own heart that hastened to a conclusion.

"Ehm, then let's assume for now I accept, what kind of obligations would I have in this world? The husband of the Queen is part of the royal family too, right?"

Aura smiled gently on Zenjirou's question, as she took it as a positive sign.

"There are no arrangements for that. I am the 32rd person to ascend the throne in our country, but I am only the third woman to do so in the history of Carpa.

Moreover, my two antecessors remained single and either adopted a child from a branch family with a strong kinship as her successor or let the younger brother, who was still a baby at the time of her enthronement, take the throne.

In other words, you are the first one to become a Queen's husband here in Carpa, Zenjirou-dono."

Aura spoke as if it was already decided that he would become her "husband", but Zenjirou couldn't afford to concern himself with that, because in her sentence was a part that drew all his attention.

"P- Please wait a moment! Do you mean that this country does not legally fix the rights and obligations for the prince consort?"

Prince consort was referring to the Queen's husband. Since no Queen married in this country so far, this term might not actually exist.

The Queen nodded calmly to the flustered Zenjirou.

"Yes, document-wise that is the case. However, be at ease, Zenjirou-dono. As you can see from our history with three female rulers amongst thirty-two, our society is patriarchic. Naturally at business, but the head of the family is also always a man too. It is a women's virtue to be compliant.

I promise that once we marry, I will do everything in my might to meet your wishes, whatever it might be"

She uttered incredible sweet words like that.

"Uh-oh…"

The conversation had totally gone over Zenjirou's head and he answered with a silly reply and a blank facial expression.

If he could trust all of Aura's story, then he would have no special obligations to fulfil when marrying her, and she even would be compliant, trying her best to please him.

…That sounded way too convenient. Not even Zenjirou, whose brain gears were still working slowly, could accept this so easily. It was obviously too good to be true.

(Wait, just think about it. There has to be something behind it.)

Faced with conditions so good that he inadvertently wanted to swallow them without judging too strictly, Zenjirou desperately wracked his brain.

(To begin with, what does Aura-san gain from this marriage? Preserving the royal blood line? Just that?)

Zenjirou strongly inherited the royal blood, so his existence was incredible appealing for sure, considering that the royal family died out except for Aura.

However, would one offer such sweet conditions just for that? A husband that did nothing but making a child. The world called them "spongers".

(Going so far as to make her husband a sponger, maybe Aura-san has a high craving for good-for-nothings? Can't be…)

If that wasn't the case, there should be some huge merit for her somewhere. Otherwise she wouldn't have offered such "sweet conditions" to begin with, no matter how suitable to the lineage Zenjirou was.

(It's no use. I don't know enough.)

"Push through a deal without reading the small print and it'll come back to haunt you later." Zenjirou recalled the bitter words of his senior at work and asked Aura a question afterwards.

"Excuse me. Getting back on topic, what will you do when I reject your offer, Aura-san? You will still have to marry, right?"

"Yes. In that case, I will most likely have to accept an aristocrat with relatively strong royal blood from within the country as my husband. Though while I say strong, it is not all that noteworthy.

That is precisely the reason I went through all the trouble to call you here, Zenjirou-dono, albeit knowing what troubles it causes you."

Aura showed a self-deprecating smile.

(I see. She technically has groom candidates in the country too. Well, figures. …Mh? Wait, could it be… I'll try a leading question.)

Zenjirou suddenly came up with a certain possibility, swallowed his saliva unknown to Aura, then asked the next question with a voice that feigned composure as much as possible

"I take that these candidates had their great-grandfather or great-grandmother in the royal family?"

Aura, not seeing through his leading question, shook her head with a wry smile.

"Not at all. There is no one left with such thick kinship. They are people, whose great-grandfather's grandfather or at best, great-grandfather's mother was part of the royal family."

(! I knew it. Bingo!)

Zenjirou hid his inner surprise on Aura's answer and somehow kept a poker face.

His superior at work once said: "In business let your reason control your expression, not your emotion." That teaching came to be useful in a different world.

Aura's answer just now was obviously strange. To express it in numbers, the aforementioned were people with royal blood in the fifth generation in case of the great-grandfather's grandfather or in the fourth generation in case of the great-grandfather's mother.

In turn, Zenjirou's ancestor that came to earth, lived five generations ago. If there were people around with blood in the fourth generation like Aura said, then there was no reason to summon Zenjirou, whose blood was only in the fifth generation.

Zenjirou had a rather thick kinship due to the isolated rural village he was raised in, but Aura shouldn't have known about that until she summoned him. In fact, she called it a "lucky surprise".

In other words, the very explanation about summoning a groom from a different world to have a child with someone that strongly inherited the royal blood, was a lie.

(Then why did she summon me? Maybe even the stuff about marrying me was a lie? No, don't go there. If I doubt that, there's no end to it.)

Zenjirou himself had basically no way to return home by his own strength. Going by that, Aura had no need to deceive him with an appealing offer, because she could just lie to him with "There is no way to return you to your original world".

Most likely Aura was trying to have a discussion as sincere as possible.

(So it should be safe to assume that both her desire to marry me and the favourable conditions are true. And it makes more sense that way. But then why? Why did Aura-san dare to summon a descendent, whose kinship was weaker than the aristocrats in this country, from the royal family that fled to a different world and even give such favourable conditions?)

"Zenjirou-dono? What is the matter?"

"Ah, nothing. Sorry. I was a bit preoccupied in thoughts. So, when I marry you, what do you expect me to do? And I don't mean on the official front, but your personal aspiration."

Aura shrugged her shoulders a bit on Zenjirou's question, then answered pleasantly straightforward.

"Nothing in particular. If you accept my proposal, it means that you will throw away everything, your home, your family and your life so far for my sake. I am not so shameless to ask anything more of you.

I just would like to have your cooperation in making a child for preserving the royal bloodline."

Apparently his only obligation would really be to make a child with the hot babe in front of him. At least it to his eyes it looked like Aura was saying that in good earnest.

"I see…"

Aura's answer was still the sweet temptation that drove a man crazy, but Zenjirou had anticipated that answer this time.

(Maybe my assumption is actually true? These conditions aren't favourable "to me", but right from the beginning, they were the most desirable ones "to Aura-san"?)

Zenjirou arranged the information he had gained so far inside his head.

・The Carpa Kingdom had people with a thicker kinship than the descendant from the royal family that fled into a different world.

・Yet, Aura dared to summon that descendant (Zenjirou) as her husband.

・Zenjirou happened to have strongly inherited the royal blood, but that was just a „lucky surprise“.

・Aura told him that he had nothing to do, except making a child.

・This country‘s society was fundamentally patriarchic and the existence of a Queen was rare.

・By the culture of this country, the head of the family was always the husband while the wife had the virtue to be compliant.

・The Queens so far had been single and in the history of this county, this would be the first time a „Prince Consort“ existed.

Going by their conversation so far and the overwhelming charisma coming from her whole body, Aura had more than enough talent as a Queen.

Zenjirou kept asking questions to prove if his assumption was correct.

“Allow me two more questions please. Where would I live if I were to stay here?”

“In the Inner Palace, most likely. Usually the King of our country would take various wives as his Queen or concubines. It is a bit of an irregularity, but the Inner Palace would become the home to our married life.”

As expected. There was nearly no doubt now.

“Then one last question.

How would you take it if I were to shut in myself in the Inner Palace, avoid contact with the outside as much as possible, concern myself only with you and just spent my days by hanging around sloppily after I married you?”

Aura reflexively replied to Zenjirou’s hypothetical question with today’s brightest smile, as she couldn’t hold it back anymore.

“That would be fantastic!”

Zenjirou confirmed that his assumption was completely correct upon that utterance.

(Okay, the puzzle is solved. There’s no doubt. The condition “No need to do anything” isn’t a bait for me, but she genuinely wants a “husband that does nothing”.)

Her first choice of a man was a sponger, in the truest sense of the word.

If you thought about it, it wasn’t actually all that strange.

His days swamped with work in a kind of sweatshop, Zenjirou had tried to measure things with his own values, but that was his mistake.

Since he was tired from work, getting a lifestyle without work and all necessities provided + a beautiful bride was rather appealing to him, but that wasn’t the general value concept in this world.

For the one that became “Prince Consort”, working meant nothing else but exerting the political power.

Surely only a minority of men found it unappealing to make use of a mighty political power.

In this country, a “Prince Consort” could gain a respectable political power, even if his authority wasn’t legally fixed.

After all, the country’s culture itself was modelled around a patriarchic society and the head of a “family” would always be a man, even if he married into the family.

And the woman, who became his wife, was expected to be as compliant as possible to the man she married. So in an extreme case, the “Prince Consort” might even be able to “order around” the “Queen” through the “family” instance.

At least, the “Queen” wouldn’t be able to ignore the “Prince Consort’s” opinion in public.

(Right. A groom from the aristocrats would probably strive for power and if such a person became the “Prince Consort”, Aura-san might get all of her power snatched away from her. Well, even if he doesn’t go that far, he would work out a profit for his parental home for sure.)

A dual power system of a Queen and a Prince Consort. It wouldn’t be strange if it caused a civil war in the worst case.

(Indeed, if you think about it like that, it’s understandable that she wants to specially call a groom from a different world. There is no proof that a groom from a different world has no political ambitions, but at least he won’t pull any strings for his own family. Although it just prevents the groom’s family from abusing their power as the consort clan, it’s a reasonable action.)

Throughout the history of all countries alike, there are quite a lot of cases, where the family of the ruler’s partner— the “Consort Clan” were the reason for the country’s ruin.

Aura had curiously watched over Zenjirou, who had pondered a lot and asked question after question, and opened her mouth once she saw that he had calmed down.

“I am well aware that it is absurd to have you make such a life-changing decision on the spot. However, as I mentioned before, the summoning magic is dependent on the star constellation, so we do not have much time.

You do not need to give me an answer right here, but I would like you to make up your mind until tomorrow morning at the latest.

I am one-sidedly pushing my circumstances onto you. It will cause you no harm if you were to reject it, and if you were to accept it, I promise you that I will conduct myself as your wife as faithfully as possible.

What do you say, Zenjirou-dono?”

Aura explained it to Zenjirou like that with a soft smile and an earnest look. No, “persuaded” might be more appropriate for this.

“Yeah, well…”

Zenjirou simply closed his eyes on the Queen’s persuasion and pondered.

If the assumption he came up with earlier was correct, then this was a sweet deal.

However, to say it again, the price for it was his whole life that he spent on earth so far.

Somehow, the man called Yamai Zenjirou had lived up to this very day by supporting himself, adjusting himself and cultivating himself as a single human.

Certainly, his job was tough and he was always considering to quit, but he took pride in managing an independent lifestyle.

It must be called a “man’s pride”.

Accepting Aura’s proposal meant to throw away that “pride” and accept a lifestyle where he depended on a woman.

Now, was that acceptable? Was Yamai Zenjirou’s “pride” something so trivial that it could be thrown away so easily?

(If I think about it a bit calmly, it’s nothing to be troubled over.”

It wasn’t a matter to idly delay until tomorrow morning. Because he had already come to a conclusion.

When Zenjirou opened his eyes with his mind made up, he looked straight into Aura’s reddish brown eyes, leaned over the table and said flatly.

“Let’s get married, Aura-san!”

Yamai Zenjirou’s “pride as a man” counted indeed for nothing.

Intermission 1: The Queen's confidential Meeting

In the night of the day Yamai Zenjirou was summoned, Carpa's Queen Aura the First assembled several of her trusted retainers in her private chamber and had an informal meeting.

The flames from the candleholder on the table bathed the broad room in a feeble light.

Aura sat on a chair that was woven from southern vines with her legs crossed, looked at the retainers assembled before her and opened her mouth.

"So, what about my future husband?"

She first spoke to a young waiting maid with long blonde hair, who stood at the very back.

"Very well. It appears he has turned in for the night a short while ago."

The blonde waiting maid reported plainly with a high and clear voice.

"I see, good. Still, it seems he is quite the night person. We might have to prepare an extra budget for illumination in the Inner Palace from now on."

Absorbed in thoughts, Aura rested her chin on one palm of her crossed arms and muttered.

If Zenjirou had heard that, he surely would have been disinclined about that evaluation. The current time was around ten at night at best. Zenjirou was used to return home around midnight on a weekday, so this was probably an early retire for him.

Even though he hadn't been all that sleepy, he willingly had erased the lights and gone to bed in consideration to the waiting maids, who had to stay on duty until he went to sleep.

Calling that "Staying up late" or "Night person" would leave him in a bind.

Well, no surprise. In modern Japan he could have plenty of light through electricity all day long if he wanted to, whereas in this world the only light source was generally "fire" itself, used on torches, candles or lamps. The perception of a night's timeframe was fundamentally different.

There were very few shops in this world that had opened during the night. Even the extremely busy mainstay of the Palace truthfully perceived "the night as the time to sleep".

A middle-aged man with a slender face, who stood at the front and seemed to be a civil officer, remarked upon hearing Aura's words.

"At any rate, congratulation on obtaining a groom, Your Highness. Now, as what kind of person did Zenjirou-dono appear to you?"

That middle-aged man— Fabio Debache was Aura's private secretary.

Originally the private secretary was a position without much authority, but at the present time, Aura hadn't appointed a Prime Minister, nor an Admiral, and lead the government and army by herself. So his authority has the "Queen's right hand" was unimaginable vast.

The Queen lightly shrugged her shoulders on the question of her trusted retainer, then

"He is far more keen than I had imagined. Moreover, he possesses a coolly judgement and a fair amount of audacity. I say it is an 'unlucky surprise'."

she answered flatly.

Determining her evaluation, which only sounded like a praise, as an "unlucky surprise" was proof that the Queen wasn't seeking a capable husband.

The ideal husband for Aura was a man that drowned himself in the offered luxury, was satisfied by simply having practical desires like money, woman and delicacies fulfilled and showed not the slightest interest in political power.

“Especially that last question from him. Zenjirou-dono most likely realized my intentions. And he still accepted my marriage proposal.”

Aura remembered the conversation from during the day and snickered. After all, he went as far as asking “How would you take it if I were to shut in myself in the Inner Palace, avoid contact with the outside as much as possible, concern myself only with you and just spent my days by hanging around sloppily after I married you?” outright.

It was quite apparent that he fully understood what she wanted from her husband, or to be more precise “what she didn’t want”.

“At first I assumed that he was of humble upbringing, but judging by his intelligence, he might belong to an aristocrat class in the other world.”

“That cannot be ruled out.”

“His behaviour and manners leave a bit to be desired, but it is a fact that it would be somewhat strange to consider him an uneducated commoner.”

All of the assembled retainers nodded in agreement to Aura’s failed expectations.

At this point, Aura and the others unwittingly ended up applying the common sense of their own world to the other world. In their world only the royal family, the aristocrats and a few rich families had the right for education.

For the better or worse, the great majority of the commoners were nothing but illiterate and unrefined people to them. Taking the whole south continent into consideration, there were education institutes open even for commoners, but a country like modern Japan, where every citizen went through a mandatory education of nine years was completely unfathomable for Aura and the others.

“However, if that is the case, it is not unthinkable that Zenjirou-sama has some kind of ulterior motive for accepting this marriage. If you wish to annul the engagement with him, we can give up on re-summoning him a month later.”

The man, who said that, was the elder in the purple robe that had stood on the left of Aura when Zenjirou came to this world.

In reply to the words of Carpa’s royal archmage Espaldion, Aura turned up her nose at him and shook her hand vehemently.

“Stop jesting, old geezer. Are you suggesting I should take the ‘Insatiable Wolf’ of the Guillén Family or the ‘Marionette’ of the Márquez Family as my groom? If I were to do that, Carpa would fall to ruin from civil strife after we finally lived through the war.”

The old mage showed a wry smile in response to the Queen’s curt words, stroked his long grey beard, then picked up on the groom candidates that the Queen had criticised.

“Your Highness, you are being too harsh. Sir Puyol Guillén is a brilliant general and Sir Raffaello Márquez is an excellent civil official.”

“I am aware of that even without you telling me, old geezer. I myself put them into these positions. However, I am saying that no matter how capable they are, an overly ambitious man or a youngling that does not dare to oppose his parents are not suited to be my husband.”

Aura’s evaluation of them was harsh, but by no means wrong, so the aged magician couldn’t say anything back anymore.

“Then you are going to take Zenjirou-dono as your husband after all?”

The middle-aged man with the slender face— Fabio got back on topic, to which Aura simply nodded in response.

“Yes. I am a bit concerned that he is more intelligent than I expected, but I approve of his personality. At least he is better than the ‘Insatiable Wolf’ and the ‘Parent’s Marionette’. His royal blood is strong as well,

so we can hope that he himself will be able to use the ‘Space-Time Magic’ with some training, instead of simply passing on the disposition for it onto our child.

Then not even the aristocrats will be able to complain in public.”

Marriage for the sake of passing on the “Space-Time Magic”, the royal bloodline magic onto the next generation with certainty was a more than enough of a just cause in this world, where the country’s strength was adequate to the number of people that could use the “Space-Time Magic”.

In the not so distant future, when Zenjirou himself learned to use the “Space-Time Magic”, no one would be able to openly oppose their marriage.

“However, not only has he a different social standing, but he is also from a different world. I believe there will be many problems to building a family even after you get married.”

In response to the elder mage, who worried about the future, Aura replied with a meaningful smile.

“Well, these are problems that arise regardless of whom I marry. It is just a matter of my sincerity and effort now. I already told my future husband this noon, this marriage purely arises from my one-sided circumstances. I will grant his wishes as long as they do not interfere with our government.”

The good faith Aura had shown Zenjirou this noon was by no means a farce.

Aura herself had a mental burden of debt towards Zenjirou for dragging him into her circumstances and even rational considered, it was natural to meet your future husband with sincerity.

A husband was not a subordinator, but a family member. If everything went well, he was a close companion she would live with for years until their death, sharing the bed numerous times.

Having a feud would only be exhausting.

“I understand. That is a ‘family’ matter, so we will leave that up to you, Your Highness. However, it is a state matter whether you will have a child or not. In the unlikely case that you are incompatible for the ‘night duties‘, please report to us at once.

Fortunately for us, Zenjirou-sama has inherited the royal blood strong enough that we can hope that he will learn the ’Space-Time magic’. And there are a lot of ‘women’ in our country that have inherited the royal blood as strong as Puyol-dono or Raffaelo-dono.”

It was secretary Fabio, who spoke so extremely frank and blatant.

Indeed. The situation had changed from before, now that a man with strong royal blood in form of Zenjirou had appeared.

Until now, only Aura had been able to use the “Space-Time Magic”, so it had been the utmost priority that Aura gives birth to a child, but now Zenjirou, a man with latent royal blood on a level where he should be able to use the “Space-Time Magic”, had appeared, which set the priorities somewhat anew.

In an extreme case it was also possible that Aura ruled as an unpaired Queen like the other precedents and the child between Zenjirou and a woman with royal blood would succeed her.

To begin with, the marriage of a Queen was a contradiction between the law, “absolute authority of the ruler”, and the culture, “the head of a family is always a man”.

It was more than likely that the aristocrat women with royal blood would use that contradiction as an excuse to call off the Queen’s marriage and aim to marry Zenjirou themselves once his existence became known.

In a way, Zenjirou was a golden egg, but also a landmine at the same time.

However, Queen Aura showed no signs of anger over her retainer’s blatant words and recrossed her legs while sitting on the chair, giving a profound answer.

“Yes, that will be a matter for later, but I have already thought of a way to deal with it. However, I believe your concern is unnecessary. I will properly make a child with my future husband.”

“Hoo? May I inquire where this confidence comes from?”

The elder mage asked curiously, whereas Aura replied with a sweet smile.

“Oh, it is quite simple. Sitting across from him, I had dinner with my future husband tonight and his gaze was painfully fixated on my chest. He himself thought I would not notice, but it was without a doubt a lustful gaze.

It appears my body is stimulating enough for his sexual desire.”

Saying so, Aura threw out her extra-large chest proudly.

What men considered to be just a glance was as good as staring for women.

Somehow or other, Zenjirou’s wicked thoughts were completely exposed to the Queen.

Chapter 01: Temporary Return

The next day, Zenjirou woke up in the guest room of the palace.

What leaped into Zenjirou's freshly opened eyes was the curtain of a luxury bed.

He shivered his body briefly on the unfamiliar sight, but after a while he remembered where he had gone to bed last night and relaxed his shoulders.

"…Ah, right. I'm in another world."

Zenjirou got out of the bed that seemed bigger than his 10m² room and lowered his feet onto the carpet on the floor.

He put on the slippers that were prepared for him next to his feet and walked down the broad room whereupon he noticed that he was unconsciously scratching his stomach with his right hand.

"Argh, it itches all over. Guess the bugs got me. Yesterday I accepted the marriage on the spur of the moment, but I might have been a been hasty…"

Zenjirou mumbled all too late.

Just by being here all day yesterday, he realized how inconvenient this world was compared to modern Japan.

All of the food that had been served for lunch and dinner was deliciously seasoned, but the water and alcohol to it were oddly lukewarm.

Zenjirou's taste buds were so poor that he couldn't tell the difference between normal beer and low-malt beer, but like a proper Japanese, his motto was "Low-malt beer has to be ice-cold".

So for him, the warmth of the wine served for dinner was disgusting, not even taking the taste into consideration.

Speaking of warmth, the climate itself was a problem. The impression he got from Aura's conversation yesterday was that this Carpa Kingdom had a rather hot climate, even compared to the Kantou area of Japan.

Even at the coldest season, rarely anyone would wear long sleeves outside and during the hottest season, people would "refresh" themselves by sticking close to each other in confined spaces as much as possible, since the outside temperature would raise above the one of the body.

Zenjirou recalled with a somewhat displeased face how he heard about a similar countermeasure for Indian summers.

Things like thermometers didn't exist in this world, so he couldn't be sure, but he better prepared himself for winters with a minimum temperature of 20°C and summers with over 40°C.

Needless to say, this world didn't know about air conditioning either. For Zenjirou, who only ever spent summers with air conditions in Japan, this heat was hell.

As a matter of fact, he had a hard time sleeping last night because of it. Although it wasn't the peak of the summer yet, it took him more than an hour to fall asleep while he continued to turn around on top of the king-sized bed.

That said, not only the heat disturbed his sleep. The other factor interfering with his pleasant rest was "bugs".

Apparently this world had no glass windows. Due to that, the windows all had wooden shutters, which were kept open during the day to let the light in. Naturally, the bugs had a carte blanche to enter.

Technically the curtain of the bed functioned as a mosquito net, but it couldn't shut out all of the bugs.

As a result, Zenjirou had been bitten by bugs all over his body by the time he woke up.

However, even facing all these inconveniences, what annoyed him instead was the restriction of the night.

To be honest, he had never thought that a night without electrical light would be so troubling.

During his meal with Aura, a large chandelier with big candles had illuminated the place sufficiently, but when he walked down the hallway, he could only rely on the oil pan carried by the waiting maid that escorted him.

And even his room had only a single oil pan prepared on the table as a light source.

If he were to try reading a book with that kind of light, he would ruin his eyes for sure.

“I had heard that people went to bed early and woke up early in the past, but now I can relate. I mean, you can’t do anything but sleep during the night like this.”

Zenjirou changed his clothes while inadvertently mumbling some complaints.

Yesterday, he had already turned down the “help with changing clothes”, which was a custom for royals and aristocrats, from the waiting maid.

His current attire was loose trousers with a sash around the waist and a baggy top like a negligee that reached till his knees.

These were the typical night clothes for the upper class, but after one night of wearing them, Zenjirou got the impression that he would rather sleep in trunks and a T-shirt instead. To begin with, he got entangled in the negligee he was wearing, since he turned around numerous times due to his bad sleeping posture.

Having said that, Zenjirou was a special guest, the Prince consort, albeit unofficial at this point. Clothes, food and residence, everything provided to him surely were of the greatest quality, but it was a matter of fact that these goods couldn’t satisfy Zenjirou, a commoner of modern Japan.

The era and degree of culture was significantly different.

After he changed from the borrowed clothes into his own familiar clothes, Zenjirou sat down on the edge of the bed and waited for the waiting maid to get him.

“Now that I think about it, Japan sure is blessed. Nearly all houses have a refrigerator and air conditioning. In comparison, this place doesn’t even have electricity. But I don’t have to work here. Not to mention, Aura-san is super pretty.”

He had gone through warm alcohol, an uncomfortable bed and a dark night, but what captured him enough to make an informal engagement yesterday was Aura Carpa’s charm.

Aura had appeared in a red evening dress with a bold slit in front of Zenjirou at yesterday’s dinner and fascinated her fiancé from the other world again with her charming smile and sexy body.

Completely smitten by her Highness’ daring and alluring figure, Zenjirou had let his gaze wander over the cleavage of Aura’s voluminous breasts, her dress slit and thighs in a natural way (or at least Zenjirou thought so himself) the whole time.

Thinking back on it now, that ass, breasts and thighs were worth enough to throw away the life in modern Japan.

“Oh, right. I brought my bicycle with me here. That means, when I come back in a month, I can take some luggage with me, doesn’t it. Great, I’ll make a list for marriage-portion once I’m home!”

Saying so, Zenjirou clapped his hands together and at the same time, the door was knocked.

“Yes!”

“Excuse me. The breakfast is served.”

Zenjirou replied to the familiar voice of the waiting maid from the other side of the door with a loud voice.

“Yes, I’m coming!”

Standing up from the bed, he swiftly rushed over to the door.

* * *

It was a fact that Yamai Zenjirou was a special guest in the Carpa Kingdom, but his existence was currently only known to Queen Aura and her close retainers.

Due to that, the only one that sat with Zenjirou at the dining table for this world's third meal, this morning's breakfast was Aura, just like during yesterday's lunch and dinner.

To express it with Zenjirou's lacking vocabulary, the culture of Carpa felt like "a mixture of a typical fantasy set in mediaeval Europe and an uncivilized southern country".

The long table, at which easily around 30 people could dine at the same time, surprisingly was one log split into two and with the surface polished up smoothly.

Zenjirou couldn't even imagine how old that tree had been. To manufacture such a long log in one piece must cost way more than one out of marble.

On top of this large wooden table were soup in silver plates and round bread in basket lined up.

Zenjirou relished the foreign food while chit-chatting with Aura.

"We have already made preparations for your return. The constellations are favourable during forenoon today too, so it simply depends on you, Zenjirou-dono, when you will return. Just tell us when you are ready."

Wiping the bottom of the soup plate with a piece of bread, Aura put it into her mouth and after she chewed it carefully and swallowed it, she reported the current situation to Zenjirou with her usual calm voice.

On the other hand, Zenjirou, ignorant of this world's table manners, tilted the soup plate with his left hand while he tried to remember how Aura took her meal. He spooned the amber-coloured liquid with his silver spoon and timidly lead it towards his mouth.

"Thank you, Aura-san. I am fine with returning any time. I only have one question: How much luggage can I take along between the worlds during the summoning or return?"

Aura wasn't the type of person, who would fuss over table manners during a private meal, but Zenjirou would definitely attend public dinners as the Prince's consort from now on.

Aura appreciated Zenjirou's attempt at remembering the table manners now and swallowed her words of "You can eat as you want without minding about manners", giving him a smile instead.

"Mhm, the summoning magic summons a person, so it principally should only be able to bring over things that you wear on your body. That mysterious vehicle you brought with you by chance surely is the limit."

Zenjirou inadvertently dropped his shoulders on Aura's answer, which was greatly different from his expectation.

"Uwa, seriously? That's bad. Then I can't take anything fancy…"

"Zenjirou-dono? Has something caught your eyes in the inner palace?"

Aura tilted her head, whereas Zenjirou shook his hand in front of his head, correcting her misunderstanding.

"Ah, no. I didn't mean for my return, but for the next summoning in one month. If possible, I would've liked to bring over some tools and stuff from my world…"

"Oh, I see."

Aura came to an understanding upon Zenjirou's answer.

Come to think of it, her future husband should be in possession of some properties for living in the other world. If Zenjirou was an aristocrat or nobility in the other word, just like the retainers had speculated with Aura last night, it wouldn't be strange that he owned an immense fortune that he doesn't want to let go.

"Certainly, considering your position, you would want to do something about that. Let's see…"

The Queen wanted to fulfil his demands as best as possible all along, so she pondered what to do.

"….Oh, I know. We might be able to use that."

After going through various possibilities inside her head, Aura found an useable one and clapped her hands together.

"Is there some kind of way, Aura-san?"

Zenjirou sat on the edge of his chair with a joyful look, whereas Aura nodded once.

“Yes. We have a magic carpet with barrier magic weaved into it, which is the foundation for the ‘Space-Time Magic’.

We will give you the carpet for your return to the other world and if you activate it’s barrier when we summon you again in a month time, it should bring over everything inside that barrier.

In the end, it is just a single carpet. It most likely cannot store all of your fortunes, but at least you will be able to bring more than with your bare hands.”

“Ohh, sound like I can bring a lot of stuff then! Ah, but my potential aside, I cannot use magic at the moment…”

Zenjirou’s joyful look changed into a disappointed one. Aura gave him a “No worry” smile and explained.

“Rest assured. A magical tool activates just by pouring mana into it. If in the worst case, you cannot even do that, just drip some blood onto the carpet. Your blood is rich on mana.”

On Aura’s reply, Zenjirou’s joyful look returned at once.

“Ah, now that is something even I can do. Thank you for everything, Aura-san.”

“Oh please, compared what you are doing for me, this is insignificant, so your gratitude is unnecessary.”

Saying so, Aura gave him a composed smile.

Zenjirou didn’t know the value of a magical tool, so he accepted Aura’s good will without questions, but if he had known of its value beforehand, he might have realized for a bit just how sincere Aura’s interaction with him had been.

Magical tools were created with a magic called “Bestowal Magic”.

Just like the “Space-Time Magic” from the royal Carpa Family, the “Bestowal Magic” could only be used by members of a certain royal family too. It was commonly known as “Bloodline Magic”. Needless to say, magical tools created with “Bestowal Magic” were extremely rare and had skyrocketing prices.

Not to mention, the magic weaved into carpet in question was “Space-Time Magic”, although just the basic of basics. In other words, it was a gem that combined the secret techniques of two royal families. It could also be called the proof of good relations between these two families. It was without a doubt a national treasure.

At this point, Aura casually added as she suddenly realized something.

“Anyway, I am glad that you are pleased, Zenjirou-dono. Is there anything else you need? You are my betrothed, so there is no need for restraint now.”

Aura, who had finished her breakfast at some point, appeased her thirst after the meal with some citrus water and softly called out to Zenjirou.

Tasting the same drink from a silver cup, Zenjirou appraised it’s sweet-and-sour, but refreshing flavour (which would be even better when cold from ice cubes) as sumptuous while he pondered for a while. Then he replied.

“Well, not that I can think of any… Oh, wait. Betrothed. Yes, we are going to marry. In that case, Aura-san, do you have a ring for your ’left ring finger’? If so, I want you to lend me one.”

Being reminded about “wedding rings” from the words betrothed and marry, Zenjirou asked that.

But as this world had no custom of “wedding rings” or “engagement rings”, Aura didn’t understand Zenjirou’s intentions and tilted her head puzzled.

“Mhm, I think I will find one when I look, but what are you going to use it for?”

“That’s, well, uhm… Something to look forward to in a month.”

Zenjirou smiled vaguely on Aura’s question and gave an ambiguous answer. Since she didn’t know about “wedding rings”, he wanted to hide it’s existence until he handed it to her as a surprise.

However, she could easily deduce from joining the two statements “Lend me a ring of your size” and “Look forward to it in a month” together that her betrothed tried to present her a ring upon his return, even if there was no custom such as “wedding rings”.

Aura showed a mysterious smile that was very charming, yet not flirtatious and looked straight into Zenjirou's eyes, nodding once.

"I understand. I will do so then. I take that you will tell me what kind of meaning a 'ring for your left ring finger' holds in your world in a month?"

"Ah… Yes, I'll definitely do so then."

Zenjirou realized that she already had seen through his plan more or less. Along with a bitter smile, he replied with these words.

* * *

The first transfer had ended before he knew it, but the second one left Zenjirou with a kind of drunkenness.

"…Whoops."

He staggered on his first step, shook his head to shake off the sensation that warped his vision and let his eyes wander around.

An asphalt street. Countless cars driving on it. And on each side of the street stood miscellaneous concrete buildings lined up next to each other.

The familiar scenery and the smell of fumes really made Zenjirou feel "at home".

Nothing had really changed here, so he wondered if his trip to that world had only been a daydream, but the fact that he was now on foot without his bicycle he went out with, was proof against it. Instead he was now carrying a rolled up carpet in his hands.

Moreover, he wore the golden ring he got from Aura on his left little finger.

This physical proof convinced him that yesterday had not been a dream.

"Actually, it felt like everything happened in succession, but actually a whole day went by…didn't it?"

Mumbling to himself, Zenjirou suddenly lost confidence in his own senses. He had spent a whole day in the other world, so he simply thought that today was Sunday, but there was no guarantee that the same amount of time had passed on earth.

It could still be Saturday for all he knew. In the worst case, numerous days could have even passed here.

Well, there were no major changes in the surroundings, nor in the temperature or the angle of the sun, so he thought everything was alright for now, but he couldn't be sure.

"Damn, first I need to confirm my situation."

Zenjirou's imagination treaded into dangerous waters and he shivered. Then he swiftly headed towards his apartment while firmly holding onto the carpet.

"Good. There doesn't seem to be much of a time gap."

Returning to his single apartment, he confirmed today's date and time on his digital alarm clock and made a sigh of relief.

His wristband watch he brought with him into the other world and the digital alarm clock in his apartment both showed the same time.

It seemed that the time flow of the other world was nearly synchronic to this one. That was fortunate. Or so he carelessly thought, but if there had been a difference in time flow between the worlds, his plan to live in the other world would have been fundamentally gone awry.

After all, the arrangement to re-summon him had been "30 days later in the other world". If the time flow had been different, he would have to live with the suspense of getting summoned at any time.

Needless to say, bringing over any dowry would be a dream within a dream then.

Anyway, Zenjirou knew that most anxieties were nothing but groundless fears, so he sat down in front of his computer, which was set up in the corner of his room, with a bright expression and turned it on.

“Okay, I don’t have much time, so I better hurry.”

Zenjirou slapped his cheeks with his hands to regain some spirit.

Right now it was a bit past ten o’clock in the morning. The room he had left alone for a whole day had saved up the early summer heat and had become really humid.

Still sitting on the chair at the computer desk, he took the control of the air conditioning and lowered the set temperature down to 20°C.

“Fuuh… This is heaven.”

The artificial cold and unhealthy breeze blew down onto the chair, where he sat on. Zenjirou sighed and wiped the sweat from his palms on his pants, then put his right hand onto the computer mouse.

The time span of one month seemed long, but was short.

Before you noticed it, the time passed in a blink of an eye while you arranged an appointment with your business partner, allotted time and prepared the necessary materials for a presentation.

As to not even waste a single second, Zenjirou first opened an online search site and entered all the keywords he could think of.

“…Aw, damn! Guess it’s no good.”

After a couple of minutes. Zenjirou tore his hair in front of the various tabs of searching sites.

One of the few advantages of the small one room apartment was that the temperature went down satisfactory in a short period of time. He raised the air conditioning back to 25°C.

In this artificially controlled temperature, Zenjirou rocked the chair as if he was tormenting the cheap carpet on the floor and mumbled to himself.

“Mhm, even if something so unrealistic like a different world takes place, reality won’t be so easy…”

What Zenjirou missed badly during his two-days-one-night stay in the other world was mainly electric tools like air conditioning, a refrigerator or light. None of these worked without a constant supply of electricity.

So what Zenjirou first looked for was a small power generator for domestic use. However, a convenient generator that kept providing electricity for years and could be taken to the other world didn’t exist.

“The most simple would be a diesel or petrol generator. But the fuel…”

This kind of generator, which was sold for camping, could easily provide electricity without any special set-up, but naturally it needed a fuel like petrol or diesel oil.

He had heard about someone making bio-diesel on his own before, so he had looked into it, but as an amateur, Zenjirou had no hope to do that in the other world.

Roughly speaking, bio-diesel fuel consisted of three components: vegetable oil, methanol (methyl alcohol) and caustic soda.

Of these only vegetable oil could be obtained in the other world. Zenjirou had no choice but to make the methanol and caustic soda on his own. Methanol could be gained from distilling pyroligneous acid during charcoal production, whereas caustic soda could be produced from electrified salt water in two water tanks connected with an ion exchange membrane. That was what he looked up, but it was obviously beyond his powers.

Of course he could just buy ethanol and caustic soda in great quantities at a pharmacy and take it to the other world, but if he did that, it would be faster to just go to a filling station, fill a plastic container with diesel oil and take this along. However, to begin with, the amount of fuel he could fit on a single carpet wouldn’t even last for a month. Same applied if he were to bring methanol and caustic acid.

“Steaming power’s no good. Then next is wind or solar power?”

Wind power was pretty realistic. The wind blew in the other world too. But what worried him was the fickle output. Since it literally “depended on the wind”, it would be useless at a calm, sultry night.

Solar power was totally out of question. Zenjirou needed electricity for “light at night” above all.

Electricity that could only be used during the day wasn't appealing at all. He could buy a solar power generator with an integrated large battery for night use, but batteries were "consumable goods" with an extremely short life span. It was unreliable as a long-term power source.

"That only leaves the wind/solar hybrid power generator that's the current fad. That one doesn't seem bad."

Zenjirou poured some tea from the pet bottle into his cup, then returned his hand to the mouse.

Consequentially the hybrid generator was the safest choice. According to the producer it was "Easy to set-up within half a day and operable on the same day".

If he could trust that slogan, even Zenjirou should be able to set it up by himself in the other world.

However, Zenjirou was conflicted over one more power generator he coincidentally stumbled upon, even when he reached that conclusion.

"A hydropower generator for domestic use, huh. Even something like that exists…"

Zenjirou muttered, seized by its charm.

It wasn't applicable as often as wind or solar power since it depended on location, but at present even the waves of a small power generator for domestic could be applied as hydropower.

The "small hydropower generator for domestic use" he had his eyes on came in two versions, one with 0.5kW, the other with 1.0kW, and operated through the use of the gravitational force of falling water.

According to what Zenjirou looked up, hydropower generators that produced less than 10kW were classified for "general usage" and with suitable conditions regarding location, even a single household could relatively easily purchase one.

That said, there were troublesome formalities like the "river law" involved starting with the purchase through to the set-up, so it wasn't simple on sale at the nearby do-it-yourself store like the fuel based power generators.

Needless to say, the charming points of the hydropower generator were the 24/7 runtime and the overwhelming output that distinguished itself from the others.

With wind or solar power it was difficult to provide the necessary electricity for one household, even with favourable wind and sun, but not for hydropower. If the specifications in the producer's catalogue could be trusted, the output of even a small one matched the power consumption for a single household.

In other words, Zenjirou could use all the electronics here, like the air conditioning, refrigerator and computer, simultaneous without a problem even in the other world.

But as good as it sounded, there was a problem as well.

"Are there even any rivers or canals near the palace?"

He didn't get a chance to step outside the palace during his stay. Not knowing if there was enough water near the palace to operate the generator was a fundamental problem.

Going by the common sense of this world, it was unthinkable to not have water near the palace, where hundreds of people lived, but it concerned a world where magic existed after all.

"Yes, we have a mage specializing in water magic that makes us water every morning."

The possibility of being told that wasn't zero.

So he considered for a moment to buy both the hydropower and hybrid generator, but that raised a problem with his budget.

Working in a somewhat exploiting company, where at least the overtime was paid properly, for years, Zenjirou had saved up 3 million yen.

That was plentiful, considering that he was in his early 20s, but in light of his objective it was hardly enough.

The hybrid generator on his list costs around 500.000 yen. The hydropower one costs actually 1,5 million yen.

Besides the generator, there were a few other things like a big air conditioning, a refrigerator, lamps or a new computer on which he wanted to spent his budget. And when he also bought stuff like underwear,

toothbrushes, soap, towels, bath towels and gauze handkerchiefs in place of tissues, the sum would be by no means negligible.

Adding Aura's "wedding ring" to it, he couldn't afford to spent two-third of his savings only on the generators.

However, as long as there was no solution for the generator, he couldn't settle on the electronics to take along.

"Aww, guess I'll have to choose one in the end. A safe low output against a high output with the risk of being futile. Mhm…"

The matter was too delicate for a prompt decision, but he didn't got all too much time. It was different from buying meat or vegetables at a near supermarket. Delivery would take a few days too once he ordered it, and he needed a bit of time to learn how to set it up and operate it.

"Mh? To begin with, will they even sell me one if I tell them I just want the goods to set it up by myself?"

Zenjirou suddenly noticed a fundamental problem and sighed. According to the homepage he just read, the responsibility for safety wasn't with the buyer, but with the trader that set it up. So the chance that they sold only the goods was rather low?

He researched on the internet for a while, whereupon he found some rather troubling information as expected.

"…Yeah, figures. Every company has a mandatory 'consultation', 'local examination' and 'estimate for set-up' before the purchase."

Zenjirou made an exhausted sigh in front of his computer.

It required a consultation and a local examination and on top, he hadn't decided on a place yet, so it would be safe to assume that they wouldn't sell him a generator.

It seemed the hydropower generator wasn't something to buy with ordinary methods.

"In that case, would it be okay when I let them set it up at some river here, learn the course of action from watching and secretly dissembled it later to take it with me to the other world?"

Zenjirou mumbled that and was reminded about the old village he was born in right away.

"I think there was a tattered hut on the mountain near the village and close to it should be a small river with a rather fast stream. The land rights there should still belong to me, I think?"

The village was already in the middle of nowhere and the hut stood deserted even farther into the mountain. If his memory didn't prove him wrong, the land around there should belong to the Yamai family.

When Zenjirou graduated from university and found employment in the city, he had transferred the main house and fields to his uncle and his wife, as they had taken care of him. But the hut and land around it were still under his name.

Luckily enough, that hut was just a small storage shed without any electricity. It shouldn't raise any suspicion if he told them that he wanted to set up the small generator in the nearby river for electricity in the hut.

Make hay while the sun shines. Right now he was pressed for time above all.

Zenjirou dialled the number of a company for micro hydropower generators that was written on their homepage and called them immediately.

After three call signs, the phone was picked up. However, what answered him was a recorded mechanical voice.

"Hello, you have reached the sales and executive department of Technotics. We are currently unavailable to take your call. Please leave your name, phone number, and…"

"Ah, right. Today's Sunday, of course they're not doing business."

Zenjirou clicked his tongue as he hung up.

"Oh well. For now, I'll send a mail and add both my email addresses for my computer and cell phone."

He faced the computer again and started to type a mail with the topic “buying desire” to purchase a hydropower generator from the company.

* * *

On the next day, Zenjirou waited meekly in front of his superior, who solemnly looked at the “letter of resignation” before him with his arms crossed.

“You’re quitting…?”

His superior asked grumpy, whereas Zenjirou lowered his head commendable.

“Yes, I am sorry.”

In fact it was a company with harsh working conditions. People quitting wasn’t all that unusual, but in Zenjirou’s case, he had managed his work for years and finally became a part of the “working force”, only to quit now.

His superior couldn’t just tell him “Fine, just get out here” like with the newcomers.

As the perfect model for a middle-age man with his wrinkles, balding and drooping belly, his superior glared up at the standing Zenjirou from his seat.

“Going home to succeed the family, huh. Didn’t you take this job because you hated that?”

Reading the made-up excuse for quitting in the resignation letter, his superior looked grim and tilted his head.

Zenjirou had written the resignation letter, which his superior was looking at right now, with all his might last night, so he could quit smoothly.

“Well, yes. What can I say, I kind of had a change of heart…”

Since he couldn’t write that he was going to be a sponger by marrying the queen of another world, he had no choice but to lie for the reason. Breaking out in a cold sweat mentally, Zenjirou made a meek face.

“Mhm… Well, even if I force you to stay, you wouldn’t do your job properly anymore. Fine.”

These words came out of the mouth of his superior after a long glare. Hearing that, Zenjirou inadvertently made a sigh of relief.

But as to spoil his delight, the middle-aged superior raised his voice.

“However! At least finish all your projects that are due soon properly. Of course I’ll assign your long-term projects to someone else.

Ah, another thing, write up some guidelines for the next newcomers. I won’t go as far as telling you to write up something that makes you an expert just from reading it, but at least something that lets the newcomers differentiate left from right. Okay?”

If he had the right to choose, he would say not okay. To be honest, he couldn’t waste a single second right now, as he was preparing for his trip to the other world.

But he wouldn’t feel comfortable when he declined and left a bad impression behind. And if he opposed carelessly and was questioned thoroughly, leading to the exposure of his lie, then things would become way more troublesome.

“I understand. Excuse me then.”

In the end, Zenjirou had no choice but to play safe and work hard until his resignation.

Some of his work might have been taken over, but since he had to write up guidelines, he had even fewer time left than he thought.

As Zenjirou couldn’t waste even a single second, he quickly finished his lunch at a nearby beef bowl shop, then hurried over to a nearby jeweller.

“Let’s see, this ring would be around the size of 14 or 15. Your own size would be 17.”

The female shop clerk finished evaluating the ring and Zenjirou's left ringer finger and said that without breaking her business smile.

It was his first time coming to a jeweller, so even when she told him that, he had no idea what these sizes meant.

A fancy chandelier, a carpet, neatly polished like the new products, and show glasses, displaying the numerous jewellery.

Zenjirou couldn't tell that this wasn't an all too high-class shop for a jeweller, so he felt extremely out of place with his suit reeking of beef bowl.

"Oh, is that so."

The shop clerk could immediately tell that it was all Greek to Zenjirou from his behaviour and casually explained it while she went on.

"For a woman, it is a slightly big size. We only have a few rings at hand here that fit this size."

Zenjirou replied a bit stammering to the shop clerk's kind explanation.

"Yes, well, going by height, she is taller than me."

"Oh, I understand. Though you are by no means short yourself. A somewhat wider ring would surely suit such a tall person better. Please wait a moment."

The shop clerk vanished into the back to fetch some samples.

"Ah, yes."

Left behind, Zenjirou naturally remembered Aura's appearance.

A tall and sexy body, clear facial features shining with strong emotions, flaming red and long hair that represented her personality and light brown skin, which was fundamentally different from a tan.

What kind of ring would suit her the best? Zenjirou didn't understand anything about jewellery, but like the shop clerk had said, a slim ring might not suit her.

However, Zenjirou was mistaken on one thing. Aura was not taller than him.

In fact, Zenjirou was taller, even if only by a finger length. He was 1,72m tall, so Aura's height was probably around 1,70m.

Zenjirour reckoned Aura to be somewhere between 1,75 and 1,80, but that was nothing more than optical illusion caused by the aura emitted from her entire body.

"I beg your pardon for the wait. These are the rings that can be modified for you in a few days."

One by one, the shop clerk put various rings on a tray and brought it over to Zenjirou.

"Ohh, there's quite the variety."

Even while he said that, he first checked the price of each ring.

Although he knew that he was being stingy, the bills leaving his wallet weighted on his mind above all as he knew nothing about the quality of the rings.

"I recommend choosing the metal for the socket first if you are undecided. Here in Japan the most common is platinum, but going by your skin colour, I would say that gold looks better on your finger. If yellow gold is too imposing for you, we have rings in pink gold like this one as well.

Of course the poise with your fiancé is the most important factor."

In general, platinum or silver were for people with pale skin and gold for those with dark skin.

As Zenjirou had inherited the blood from the other world, his skin colour was rather dark for a Japanese.

Let alone Aura, who was 100% from the other world. Her skin had a natural and pretty light brown.

"Yes, my partner has even darker skin than me. Kind of light brown…"

“In that case I really recommend the yellow gold. As for the ornate stone, a colourful ruby or sapphire might be more favourable than a colourless diamond. Excuse the question, but can it be that your partner is a foreigner?”

“Ah, yes. That’s right, she isn’t Japanese.”

He certainly couldn’t answer “My fiancé is the Queen from another world”, so he brushed it off with a vague answer.

“Since she is a foreigner, it is also possible to choose the stone matching with her eye or hair colour. That way, it is congenial to her and it also holds the image that you are paying attention to her.”

“O- Okay, I see.”

Zenjirou wasn’t used to be exposed to this kind of situation for long, so he was overwhelmed by the shop clerk’s sale arts and just nodded to her words.

* * *

What awaited Zenjirou after his hectic lunch break with lunch and the jeweller, was an even more hectic afternoon with work.

He hung his suit jacket on the coat rack in the corner of the office, immediately loosened his necktie by a fist length and unbuttoned the top button on his half-sleeved white T-shirt. In that loose fashion, he sat down at his desk.

Zenjirou’s company had followed the recent cool biz campaign too and allowed them to come to work in casual clothes during summer, but the small company it was, it unfortunately couldn’t be applied to all departments.

Belonging to the “service department”, Zenjirou had his main work in the office, so there should be no problem coming in casual clothes, but in reality there was a high chance that he went outside to make rounds, so he actually had no choice but to come to work in a business suit.

For that reason, it was silently accepted that he loosened his attire unsightly like this to work a bit more relaxed when he had no work to do outside the office like today.

That said, Zenjirou only loosened his necktie and one button, which was still harmless. His direct superior, the middle-aged section chief usually took off his necktie, shoes and even socks inside the office and walked around barefooted in sandals.

“Better than playing tough and getting athlete’s foot.”

His excuse was rather blunt.

Zenjirou couldn’t be so open. He put the 500ml pet bottle with tea that he bought during his lunch break behind his mouse pad and woke his computer from the sleep mode that he had placed on it before the break.

The nowadays antique CRT display lighted up.

“Okay, go for it.”

He was currently working on the guidelines his boss asked him for during his resignation this morning.

There was no easy job that could be learned just through reading a document in this world, but his superior had told him to write something like a “helper for troubled times” for the newcomers.

“…Well, I didn’t have one when I started, though.”

Stopping his hands from typing on the keyboard, Zenjirou said that isolated.

He wouldn’t go as far as to say nasty stuff like “other people’s misery tastes like honey”, but it seemed somewhat unreasonable to him that the next newcomers would have less trouble than what he went through as a newcomer. Even more so when the very item to save them trouble was created in hard work by him, who practically resigned already.

Still, work was work. To resign without any troubles, he had no choice but to finish his work satisfactory.

“Mhm, guess this will do as a general outline. Next is…”

He just finished writing down a sketchy structure, so he withdrew his hands from the keyboard and took a sip from the tea in the pet bottle.

For detailed examples or what he couldn't remember, he consulted old documents. He basically wrote a summary of his projects during his three years here, so most of the documents were saved on his computer.

However, for the documents that weren't on his computer or in his file case, he had to go over to a co-worker.

After he looking for the necessary documents on his computer's hard drive for nearly an hour and not finding it, he stood up from his chair and headed towards his working senior co-worker.

"Excuse me, Yoshihi-san. Do you have the documents from the contract with the Yamaguchi Company from two years ago?"

"Mh? Yamaguchi two years ago?"

Zenjirou called out to a skinny man in his thirties. The man stopped his work and turned only his head towards him from atop his chair.

"Yes, you know, the project you were in charge of and I helped you with two years ago."

"Mmh? Ah, that one. Wait. I'm busy right now, so I'll send it per mail when I find it. Will be by today enough?"

"Yes, thank you."

"Reminds me, the chief just told me. You're quitting, Yamai-kun?"

Yoshihi called out to Zenjirou, who was about to leave at once.

He hadn't hidden it in particular, but it went around already.

While smiling vaguely with slightly guilty feelings, Zenjirou replied with "Well, yes".

"I see. You're quitting. You've been doing a lot of projects lately. I just hope they won't be shifted over to me."

"Ah, I am sorry. I will try to finish as much as possible."

This time he felt really sorry and he lowered his head in a servile manner.

Zenjirou's resignation was different from a fresh newcomer as he worked there for three years. He was part of the current working force and his leave meant that his share of the work would have to be covered by someone else.

Zenjirou realized that his real reason for quitting wasn't all too admirable, so he felt really sorry about it.

Chapter 02: Preparations and Transfer

After doing overtime till the last train, Zenjirou managed to arrive home safely. Entering his one-room apartment, he went straight for the computer and sat down before it.

He deliberately ignored the exhaustion and sleepiness that was in every fibre of his body, placed the lunch box and tea pet bottle that he bought at the convenience store on the way home, on the left side of his computer desk and checked his inbox for new mails.

“Uhh… Three years. 1,5 million yen for only three years.”

Reading the mail, Zenjirou buried his head into his hands in front of the computer and leaked a groan from his mouth.

He had groaned because of the reply from the company that sold hydropower generators for domestic use.

In short, Zenjirou inquired about three things in his mail yesterday: “Can I set up the generators you sell by myself?”, “Can I maintenance it by myself?” and “And if I do, how long can you guarantee functionality on self-maintenance?”.

The company responded to that with “You cannot. You need an electrician license. The responsibly for set-up and maintenance is with the technician, not the buyer, so we ask you to leave the set-up to our company”, “It is possible to do perfunctory maintenance like removing pebbles from the water tanks or cleaning away moss when you read the manual, but we cannot guarantee anything then. If possible, we ask you to leave the maintenance to us too.” and “The guaranteed runtime is three years.”, which heartlessly smashed Zenjirou’s hopes.

Zenjirou had anticipated the set-up and maintenance matters, so the shock from it was relatively low, but the guaranteed runtime of three years at the end gave him an immeasurable shock.

“Three years, only three years…”

Zenjirou mumbled with empty eyes.

He was prepared for it to a certain extent. To begin with, even if a dream-like generator existed that functioned until his death without any maintenance, the important electrical appliances— The air conditioning or refrigerator itself had a limited lifespan.

Their service life was about ten years at best.

Either way, we would be plunged into the lifestyle of the other world without any cultural conveniences after some time.

Therefore Zenjirou considered the electrical appliances he would bring with him as kind of “training wheels” for him to get used to the new culture.

“My body will surely acclimate oneself in ten years and if necessary, I can wilfully ask Aura-san to rebuild my room to have water running down the walls like in the old palace of the Maharaja!”

Zenjirou took his hand off the mouse and stretched both his arms upwards towards the ceiling.

This information originated from the internet as well. Back in the old days when luxury goods like air conditions didn’t exist yet, one of the Maharaja in India used his enormous fortune to build a primitive, but large system, where water streamed down the walls and was drained outside through gutters in the ground, to cool the place.

Principle-wise it was the same as the “water sprinkling” custom in old Japan. The endothermic reaction from the evaporation of the water lowered the temperature in the room.

Such a structure seemed possible in the other world too, but even though Zenjirou knew nothing about architecture, he could at least imagine that it would require a large sum of money.

Aura had told him that the country just made it through a long war and was still recovering.

Would she allow him, a mere stallion by the name of Prince Consort, to waste such a large fortune and manpower during such a time?

At any rate, it would be impossible any time soon. But ten years later, when the country stabilized, a certain degree of selfishness might be allowed. Or so he thought.

“Three years just isn’t enough. The problem is the battery.”

Zenjirou faced his computer and pondered.

The consumable parts of the hydropower generator were the bearing (from the rotating propeller) and the battery.

Thinking rationally, it was kind of obvious that a battery was included in any generator to guarantee a stable output.

The battery had a lifespan of three years. Luckily enough, even a greenhorn could change the battery by the help of the manual, since it was a consumable part to begin with, but that didn’t mean he could just go and buy a lot of spare batteries.

Of course the maker sold them separately.

To begin with, a hydropower generator was hard to use in cities due to the terrain requirement, so the majority of customers lived in the country side, where mending wasn’t easily practicable by the maker.

Due to that, it was quite natural to buy a spare battery along with the generator for unforeseen accidents, but the problem was that a spare battery was in the end, just a spare.

A battery that wasn’t used certainly lived longer than one that was in use 24/7 throughout the year, but even then, it wouldn’t be as good as new anymore after three years with unprofessional storage.

Maybe it’s easier to understand with rough example: Would you expect a battery to work exactly like the maker guarantees even after five or ten years?

“Well, I guess I can bridge some time when I buy three spare batteries? I somehow want to have enough for ten years. The bearing is good for ten years and difficult to change, so I won’t need a spare. Ah, but since most of the electrical appliances only have a life span of ten years anyway, I might as well try to do some repairs by myself then.”

Zenjirou didn’t want to abandon his plan to take electricity with him, even if it became useless after some comfortable years in the beginning.

As a student, he had watched a lot of TV and DVDs, but after becoming a working adult, he just recorded the shows and had no time to watch them, slowly amassing DVDs with the recordings from his hard disk.

He had only seen the results for the World Cup in Africa on the news too and didn’t watch a single game of his favourite junior league team or the European Football Championship in the last few years.

Ever since Zenjirou was in middle school, he had recorded and watched two to three famous drama series from the internet per year. He also never missed an episode of the one hour idol group show airing on Sunday evening. However, these recorded shows too only added to his pile of unwatched DVDs after he starting working.

Spending time leisurely without working, only satisfying basic needs and watching recorded shows.

That was a rather unproductive lifestyle, but it was more appealing than anything to Zenjirou as he was currently worn out from work.

Right now, it was so appealing that he even ignored the voice in the back of his head that asked “Won’t you eventually grow tired of such a life and don’t know what to do with yourself anymore?”.

“Either way, I can only bring with me as much as fits on the carpet and my money would be useless over there. Okay, let’s spend it all!”

With a renewed spirit, Zenjirou started collecting information about the electrical appliances he would take with him.

“Mhm, I should be able to set up the air conditioning by myself if I try hard… Wait, how do I lay the ventilation pipe outside? The walls in the palace were out of thick marble… To begin with, can a normal AC even cool down that damn broad and tall room? Will a model designed for 30m² be enough…?”

On a second thought, there were many obstacles on his way to a life with electricity in the other world.

Nevertheless, Zenjirou immersed himself in his internet research to prolong his brighter future by even just one second while washing down the slightly cooled off meat bun with the tea from the pet bottle.

* * *

On busy days time flies.

Previously when he was buried in work, time seemed to pass in a flash and Zenjirou felt impatient and lost over it, but after announcing his resignation, he now accepted it gratefully.

Leaving his house early in the morning, he went to the company while reading manga on the packed train.

As there were no morning assemblies in his company, he clocked in with his time card and headed for his desk.

His job now consisted mainly of coordinating his projects with those who would take it over after he resigned.

Rewriting documents that he understood by himself so far, in a way that others could understand them as well.

And lastly, informing the trade partners he was in charge of, about the coming change by going there with his successor and lowering his head while saying “Due to personal circumstances, I will be resigning from my position. Mr. XY will take over from now on, so please treat him well as you have me…”.

In between these tasks, he wrote the guidelines for the newcomers.

Even when he worked until shortly before the last train, there just wasn’t enough time, so Zenjirou later did extra hours in the morning, but never spent the night in the office. It was all for the sake of getting some more funds for his trip to the other world.

In the case he missed the last train, he would sleep at a business hotel near the company, but he had to pay the hotel fee by himself for now.

If he handed the accounter a receipt, taken in the name of the company, he would get the money back on his pay check the following month, so it usually wasn’t a problem, but as of now, it was a huge problem.

After all, Zenjirou would leave for the other world before he received his last pay check. Even if the hotel expenses were added to it, it was completely in vain.

To avoid this, Zenjirou worked overtime late into the night, leaving with the last train, and extra hours in the morning, coming with the first train.

For all that, it was worth the effort.

It had been three weeks, since he had handed his superior his resignation.

As of today, thanks to immersing himself in overtime with only a little bit more than four hours of sleep at average, Yamai Zenjirou resigned peacefully and without any problems from the company he had worked at for three years.

“Well then, Chief, thanks for everything. Good-bye.”

“Yeah, stay well.”

The section chief with middle-aged spread only replied shortly with that when Zenjirou paid him a last visit before leaving.

Moreover, after standing up, he looked at him for only a few seconds, then sat down again and got back to work like nothing had happened.

His attitude went beyond indifferent and could have made one feel hated, but Zenjirou knew how stressed the section chief was, so he sympathized with him instead of holding an ill will.

Just like in any small company, the section chief in this company wasn't just a "management" position either. Supervising the work of his subordinators and having to do his own share of work on top of it, he was a full-fledged working member.

Moreover, he got a bonus for being a section chief, but unfortunately didn't get overtime paid in return. Usually a section chief was under suspicion of being a chief "in name only" due to that, but while the chief in this company was given more authority, he had to do the same share of work as his subordinators, since there was just too much work, so he was in a darkish grey area, where a strict investigation would bust him, but was left at large.

Zenjirou, running away from the workload of an average employer at this very moment, lowered his head to the section chief, who was stuck in the bottomless swamp called overtime hell up to his neck and faced his job noble as if to say "This is my life!", with his utmost respect and left the place.

* * *

Afterwards Zenjirou rode his beloved hybrid car and after a drive of a few hours, he arrived at the village he was born in.

"Kuh… Uhh…!"

After getting out of the car, Zenjirou rolled his stiff shoulders to get rid of the stiffness under the setting sun.

The car space he rented monthly was farther away than the convenience store or supermarket he usually went to, so he had always used his bicycle. Due to that, a rare long drive like this was quite tiring for him.

Zenjirou bathed in the twilight and looked at the familiar two-story home, narrowing his eyes a bit.

"Nothing has changed here."

Since he had lost his parents in middle school, this house, where now the family of his uncle lived in, was "home" for Zenjirou.

"Okay, here I go."

He felt a bit nervous as he hadn't been home in years, so he purposefully spoke out aloud to get a grip and determined rang the doorbell.

"It's been a while, Zenjirou-kun. You look well."

Zenjirou's uncle— Yamai Tadashi welcomed the son of his late brother. He still looked like Zenjirou remembered him: A slender face with glasses and a gentle smile.

The family of his uncle consisted of four people.

His uncle, his aunt, their daughter in her senior year of high school and their son in his senior year of middle school.

The daughter attended a high school far away and lived in a boarding house, so only his uncle, aunt and the son were sitting at the table this night, but there were five chairs, not just four.

The fifth chair belonged to Zenjirou.

They had only taken care of him for nearly one year, from the summer in his second year of middle school, where his parents died, till he moved over to the dormitory of his high school, but the caring couple always kept a chair for Zenjirou even afterwards.

"Okay, we can catch up later, first we eat, Dear."

The aunt announced the start of the dinner like that and brought a steaming pot over from the kitchen.

She was the typical "hard-working old lady from the countryside", both in appearance and character. Zenjirou tried to stand up to help her, but the aunt stopped him with "It's okay, sit down" and set the table so quickly that there wasn't even time to help. Taking off her apron, she then sat down on her own chair.

“If you please, Dear.”

“Yeah. Thanks for the food.”

Prompted by his wife, the uncle took the lead.

“Thanks for the food.”

“Thanks for the food.”

“Thanks for the food.”

The aunt, the son and Zenjirou followed suit and the Yamai family started their dinner.

Needless to say, the talk this night was all about Zenjirou.

“I see. You’re going overseas, Zenjirou-kun.”

“Yes, I plan to leave in ten days. Sorry that it’s so sudden.”

His uncle said with his glassed fogged from the steam of the pot, whereupon Zenjirou swallowed the pickled Chinese cabbage, handmade by his aunt, and lowered his head, still holding his chopsticks in his right and the rice bowl in his left hand.

The uncle showed the familiar gentle smile on Zenjirou’s honest bow.

“No, it’s okay. If that’s what you want. Just never forget that this is your home too and you’re always welcome.”

He gave him a warm look.

However, Zenjirou was going to another world instead of overseas.

“Ah, yes. Thank you.”

Zenjirou hid the fact that he won’t be able to return for at least thirty years once he went over there and felt guilty over his uncle’s goodwill.

He kind of forced a topic change, since he wanted to get away from that guilt and feared he would reveal the truth if questioned further.

“Ah, right. I can’t exactly say how long I’ll be gone, but I definitely won’t be back for quite some time.

Therefore I want to sign over my car to you, Uncle, and leave it with you.”

The uncle frowned for the first time this night on his nephew’s words.

“Zenjirou-kun, you don’t need to be so considerate for us.”

Zenjirou had anticipated this response from his caring uncle, so he put his chopsticks aside and shook his hand exaggerated in front of his head.

“No, that’s not it. I’m really troubled about what to do with it. I’ll be gone for so long that I will not only miss the next inspection, but even lose my license.”

He pressed on like this.

However, the caring uncle hesitated even more after hearing these words from his nephew.

“Mhm, I see. But why don’t you just sell it then?”

The result was that the uncle suggested this to have his nephew benefit at least a bit. His caring side hadn’t changed at all.

Zenjirou unconsciously assumed a smiling expression from witnessing his uncle’s unchanged good-will and explained further.

“No, that won’t work. I’ll leave in ten days, so I’ll be gone before I find a buyer.”

“Then I can handle the sale for you and put the money into your account. These days you can even withdraw money from overseas, right? And if that isn’t possible, you can just use it when you come back.”

His uncle’s good-will exceeded Zenjirou’s expectations as he thoroughly refrained from accepting the car.

In light of his uncle's care, Zenjirou felt really heartless to have chosen to abandon everything here and marry in a different world.

"No, it won't fetch a good price anyway, since it's a really old car. It's more reasonable to have you use it."

Pushed by his guilt, Zenjirou forced his beloved car onto his uncle kind of rebellious.

The uncle then spoke with a different tone than before as he had noticed his nephew's zeal.

"Mhm, but you know, I already have a car and a small truck."

An own car was indispensable for living in the countryside. Moreover, for a full-time farmer like his uncle, it was normal to also have a small truck, which could be driven with an ordinary license, for transporting things besides the normal car.

So getting another car on top of that wasn't such a blessing.

However, Zenjirou had anticipated that answer as well, so he continued his persuasion without delay.

"Yes, so what do you say about signing it over to you, but having Sanae-chan use it? She starts university next year, right? When she has a car, she'll visit you more often."

Yes, he raised the name his uncle's daughter.

The uncle showed a wry smile on his slender face for the first time today upon these words.

"You have a point there. It's quite convincing coming from you."

His tone as he said that had a hint of blaming him.

Zenjirou only ever had responded half-hearted to the calls of his uncle asking him to drop by for a visit, when he was in university, and didn't come back even once in four years, so he felt ashamed now.

"I, I'm sorry. But I remember that Sanae-chan's first choice is an university here in the prefecture, right? Then I really think a car makes a difference."

"I see. But driving can be dangerous."

The uncle still wasn't convinced by Zenjirou. Meanwhile, someone spoke, who had stayed silent so far, while pecking at the pot. It was the uncle's son.

"Hey, are you saying that Sis will use Zen-nii's car? I wonder if she'll drive me to Iida then when I ask her."

The uncle smiled gentle at his son, who was already sparkling his eyes from the conversation just now, and rebuked him with a not so scary look.

"Watch it, Yuusaku. It's not decided yet, so stay out of it. Either way, it'll be still a year before Sanae gets her license and you'll be in the high school boarding house by then."

The energetic 9th grader didn't flinch at all from his father's words.

"But, but, during summer vacation Sis and I will come home, right? Can I ask her then?"

He placed his wish, assuming that Zenjirou's beloved car already belonged to Sanae— the daughter of the uncle.

Most guys would hate it to have their older sister drive them into the city to hang out when they get into high school, but judging by Yuusaku's words, the siblings got along quite well even now.

Catching a glimpse of the harmonic family situation, Zenjirou showed an honest smile, took a sip from the tea his aunt poured for him after dinner and called out to his ten-years younger cousin.

"Well, as long as Sanae-chan agrees, I don't see any problems. Try asking her when she comes back."

"Yeah, I'll try per mail. Thanks for the food!"

"Ah, hey, wait!"

Without any time for the uncle to stop him, Yuusaku quickly piled up his own tableware, carried it into the kitchen and then went up to the second floor with pitter-patter footsteps.

He most likely was going to send his sister a mail at once.

“Yuusaku!”

The uncle couldn’t stop him and had stood up in the middle of the dinner. Then Zenjirou, sitting across him, called out to him.

“See, Uncle, Yuusaku-kun seems pleased too, so what do you say? Will you accept it?”

“…”

Even at this point, the uncle still hesitated over his nephew’s good-will and fell silent with a troubled expression.

The last push was given by the aunt, who had silently watched over their exchange so far.

“Why not, Dear? Zenjirou-kun is already a fine adult. If you keep rejecting his favours, it seems like you’re still treating him like a child and that’s just rude.”

“I, see. Yeah… okay.”

On his wife’s advice, the uncle finally made up his mind and faced Zenjirou again with a clear expression.

“Zenjirou-kun.”

“Yes?”

“Allow me to take you up on your offer then. Thanks. I’ll tell Sanae to take good care of it.”

“Yes, sorry that it’s an old car, but consider it my gratitude for taking care of me up till now. Please use it without reservation.”

Zenjirou showed his uncle, who bowed a bit on the other side of the table, a relieved smile and gave him a bow in return, too.

At night on the same day. After the dinner, Zenjirou went straight to bed.

The 10m² Japanese-style room hadn’t change at all from the time, when he occupied it from the summer in his second year of middle school till the end of his third year.

A study desk in the corner of the room. An old radio-cassette player on top of the dresser that only played CDs.

The mattress he laid out after taking it out of the closet earlier, was still the same too.

“I guess this will always be my room…”

Zenjirou sat cross-legged on the mattress in his light blue pyjama with the lights still on and talked to himself while tampering with his cell phone.

His uncle’s family had taken care of him from middle school to university and he loved them for it, but inside his head there were still “relatives” rather than “family”.

“Relatives” as close as a family. However, the uncle might see it differently.

“I guess, I‘ve to repay them at least a bit…”

Zenjirou spread his legs and lay down on the mattress.

They had kept the room of an adult that already left the house, in order, so he could return at any time. The housing situation in the countryside certainly allowed that, but it was undeniable that this was a perfect example of the good-will from his uncle’s family towards him.

“Fuh…”

Looking up to the round fluorescent light that brightened up the room, he sighed.

Just as he sighed, a faint scent of bug repellent from the mattress teased his nose. It was inappropriate, but Zenjirou felt a bit relieved from it.

Because his own scent was completely gone from the mattress and gave him the impression that this no longer was a place for him to return.

“Well, at any rate, I’m saying good-bye to this world in ten days…”

Zenjirou lay on his mattress face up in his pyjama, opened his collapsible cell phone and confirmed today's date.

When he left his apartment, he had issued the shutoff of his phone line, gas, electricity and water, but terminated only his cell phone contract for the end of this month. The bill for his cell phone was written off his bank account anyway and the account would get this month's pay credited after Zenjirou left, so there were no problems with the payment.

So he decided to keep this convenient cell phone, which could be used anywhere, operable until the very last minute before going over to the other world.

"It's too late to regret anything now anyway…"

He had already given Aura his okay for re-summoning him in ten days. Even if he faltered now, there was no way to let Aura know about his change of mind. His transfer to the other world in ten days was already an established fact.

"And Aura-san said that it was actually an exception to be able to send me back and forth in such a short time."

When Zenjirou was summoned to the other world in ten days, the next chance to return him to this world again would come in thirty years.

Thirty years was a long period. As a matter of fact, he needed to be ready to get buried in the other world.

"I'm ready for that… or at least I think so."

Zenjirou put his cell phone besides his pillow and picked up the palm-sized rectangular box covered in a blue velvet cloth that was next to it.

Inside the box was a set of pair rings.

The wide yellow-golden ring had three transparent diamonds embedded into it next to each other.

As the diamonds didn't stick out from the ring, it lacked a fancy appearance, but the detailed geometric pattern engraved in the socket and the radiance of the three diamonds gave it a sufficient charm.

"Aura-san…"

In face of the ring, Zenjirou recalled the face of the Queen that waited in the other world.

Upon that, his lingering feelings for this world, which had reached a peak ever since he met his uncle's family again, gradually weakened.

"Guess they call this… love at first sight."

He still had some restraints, but sorted things out for a bit. Raising only his upper body on top of the mattress, he pulled the string on the fluorescent lamp and turned the light off.

* * *

The next day, Zenjirou woke up early in the morning and thankfully ate the breakfast his aunt had prepared for him. Then he went to the tattered hut in the mountains, around thirty minutes away from the village.

He stopped his car on the bumpy mountain trail, which was overrun with weed except in the rut. Looking at the tattered hut, he inadvertently leaked a voice.

"Uwah! I haven't been here since grade school, but to think it turned into this…!"

The hut, which barely withstood rain and wind, and the area around it belonged to Zenjirou.

When he graduated from university and found a job in the capital, he had kind of forcefully pushed the house and fields he had inherited from his parents onto his uncle, who had managed them as his guardian so far, but his uncle just wouldn't accept this hut and the lands around it.

Apparently the old, tattered hut was the starting point of the Yamai family.

That said, the cabin in front of him currently had a roof of zinc, so the hut itself must have been reconstructed after the 90s. Anyway, it didn't change the fact that it was a tattered hut.

“When I heard about that history, I had wondered if my ancestors were maybe chased out of the village, but if Aura-san said the truth, then it might actually be possible.”

Zenjirou looked at the tattered hut illuminated by the morning sun and mumbled deeply moved.

If Aura’s story was true, then the ancestors of Zenjirou and the Yamai family were a pair of lovers from the other world, who eloped here 150 years ago.

Two foreigners with a mixed appearances of Latin and south Asia must have stood out in a bad way during the end of the Edo period.

It was more than possible that they walked a thorny path, even after they fleeing to this world, until they found peace in this tattered hut.

“Well, seeing that the village has not a single tradition about that, they could also have blended in easily.”

Zenjirou finished his dark imagination with a positive outlook. If his ancestors were actually shunned, he would’ve at least heard a fraction of it, even if it happened in a small part of the countryside 150 years ago. However, Zenjirou hadn’t heard a single word about it.

Like he had uttered just now, it was quite imaginable that they adapted to the village surprisingly easily.

While such thoughts crossed his mind, the heavy sound of a diesel engine could be heard from the weed-plastered rugged road.

“Oh, here they come.”

Zenjirou spotted the manufacturer’s truck appearing between the trees, quickly got in his car and relocated it to make space for the truck to park.

After a few minutes, three man wearing grey overalls got off the truck parking in front of the hut.

“Please excuse our delay. We are from Technotec. I take you are ‘Yamai-sama’, who purchased the micro hydropower generated and requested its set-up?”

The seemingly oldest of the three, a middle-aged man called out to Zenjirou, who stood in front of the hut, like that.

“Yes, I am Yamai. Thanks for coming today.”

The middle-aged man returned a smile on Zenjirou’s words.

“Yes. Likewise, thanks for choosing us. We already finished siding the place a few days ago, so we can start with the set-up at once.

Just in case, I would like to confirm your order again.

You want the generator set-up in the small river over there for electricity in the building behind you. Is that correct?”

“Yes, that is correct.”

Zenjirou replied affirming with curt words.

Truth be told, he wanted to use that hydropower in the royal palace in the other world, but there was no way he could answer them honestly here.

“It’s just that I want to be able to do some minimum maintenance by myself too if something acts up, since this is the middle of nowhere as you can see. So I would like to ask if it is alright with you when I record the construction?”

Zenjirou put his request as nonchalant as possible, whereupon the middle-aged man showed a wry smile.

“Mhm~ I don’t mind the recording, but maintenance, huh. Well, it certainly is advantageous if you know how to clean the filter or water tank, but it’s better if you don’t meddle with the device itself.”

“Yes, of course. Only what I can manage as an amateur.”

The middle-aged technician fell for Zenjirou’s deceit.

“Okay. If that is the case, you are free to record it.”

“Thank you very much. Please tell me if I should get into your way.”

Having his wish granted, Zenjirou smiled at the middle-aged technician while saying so, then he returned to his car to fetch the “handycam” he had borrowed from his uncle.

“Uaah… This looks more complicated than I thought. To be honest, I might’ve been a bit naïve…”

A few hours later, Zenjirou said so a bit exhausted after he kept recording the work of the technicians with his handycam the whole time.

They started their work at ten in the morning and weren’t done yet after lunch time.

If three professional technicians already took so long, then how much trouble would it give Zenjirou when he tried to reconstruct it by himself in the other world?

“Maybe I was a bit rash.”

It was understandable that he inadvertently regretted his choice.

The slogan “easy to set up by just connecting the water intake and drainage” on the homepage apparently meant “easy for professionals”.

The small hydropower generator was composed of three big parts.

The first part was the water tank, which regulated a steady volume of water and filtered out the sand.

The next part was the generator with the water wheel and the large magnet, which would produce the electricity.

The last part was the control system that managed a stable output with an exchangeable battery.

The water tank was positioned near the river’s upstream, then a thick hose for supply was put into the river and let the tank fill with water from the river.

Afterwards, the generator part was positioned at a place sufficient lower than the water tank to allow the water to fall.

The water tank and generator were connected through a durable and flexible small hose. Through it the water, free from sand and pebbles thanks to the filter inside the tank, streamed into the water wheel within the generator.

After spinning the wheel, the water flowed through a drainage hose back into the river’s downstream.

The control system on the other hand was inside the hut.

Drilling a round hole into the wall of the hut and installing a power cable through it, the cable then was connected to the generator part at the river. All the electricity produced by the generator was fed to the control system part.

The control system part had two big batteries installed, which covered the typical fluctuation in the output of the generator to a certain extent.

In a normal house, the control system would be set up to feed the electricity into house’s interior power supply unit, but the tattered hut didn’t have such an advanced thing.

Therefore he had ordered that the control system part was extra equipped with numerous outlets, so that the electrical appliances could supply themselves directly from the part, for an additional fee.

With these outlets it was apparently possible to supply even a TV, a computer and a refrigerator without a problem.

“Please wait a moment.”

With these words, the middle-aged technician went over to the truck for a moment and came back with an old electric lamp. Most likely for a final check to see if the generator worked flawless.

“Okay, I’m turning it on!”

Then he middle-aged technician peeked out only his face through the opened door of the hut and shouted so to his two subordinators working outside.

“Yes, the water tank is alright!”

“No problems with the generator unit!”

The two other young technicians, who were respectively running the final checks for the water tank and generator, turned their arms round and round, signalizing everything alright with a loud voice.

The generator started up.

The water wheel spun and produced electricity. That electricity was immediately fed into the control system inside the hut.

The sound of a fan spinning came from the rectangle box and the light at the top on the right of the control system shone green, the proof that the device was running regular.

“Okay, time to test it.”

Confirming the green light, the middle-aged technician put the lamp down on the seasoned wooden floor and plugged its cable into the control system. Then he turned on the lamp.

The dim interior of the hut was illuminated by the bright light of the lamp.

“Ohh!”

“It seems to work just fine.”

Zenjirou was in awe and the middle-aged technician in front of him showed an accomplished smile from finishing his job, wiping the sweat from his forehead with the towel around his neck.

About one hour later.

“Okay, now I’ve taken the biggest hurdle.”

After the truck with the Technotec guys left, Zenjirou, staying behind at the hut all by himself, muttered that in front of the new-build generator.

The charging cable of the handycam with the record of the generator’s assembly was connected to the generator’s outlet.

Seeing as the lamp for proper charging was shining, the generator operated without any troubles so far.

Zenjirou picked up the manual the technicians left behind and browsed through the control system category.

“Let’s see, the red lamp here is for abnormalities and this value shows the current output. With an output like this, it seems like I can use all my electrical appliances from my apartment simultaneous, but when I bring it over to the other world, I have to reassemble it from scratch and there’s no guarantee it’ll produce the same output then.”

The manual had a wattage list for common electrical appliances too.

With that, it was evident at a glance how much electricity an electronic appliance roughly needed to work.

The maximum output of his “micro hydropower generator” was 1 kW. A single living in a one-room apartment could easily make do with that amount, but a family of four or five could normally live in a single house with that too, but that was only theoretical at best.

The display currently indicated an output of a bit more than 600W at the most.

Even if he succeeded in somehow taking this generator to the other world and reassembling it there, it was unlikely that he would get the same output as the current one, which was assembled by professionals.

“That kind of limits the electrical appliances I can use regularly…”

Zenjirou glared at the holey ceiling and pondered for a while.

“Maybe should I just bring the appliances I stored away over here and try them out to see how many work with it.”

He reached such a conclusion.

Either way, it was pretty much a matter of fact already that he would depart to the other world from here, since the hydropower generator was set up here.

On the last day, he would have to turn off the power and empty the water, placing everything on the carpet he got from Aura, but the generator itself was already 75kg heavy.

With a handbarrow, Zenjirou could load it into the car by himself some way or another, but instead of all this trouble, it was way more efficient to lay out the magic carpet inside the hut and use this place as his departure location for the other world. Getting the generator from the river to the hut required a bit of effort, but it was nothing impossible with a handbarrow.

“In that case, I’ve to bring everything here on the last day anyway. So it won’t harm to bring them over even now.”

When he had moved out of his apartment, he had rented a storage room and put everything he wanted to bring with him to the other world there, disposing of all the rest.

The only things he brought with him to the house of his uncle in his car were: a bit of hand baggage, a change of clothes, the wedding rings and the magic carpet.

And when he contacts the moving service and has his stuff at hand before he transferred, it saved him a last minute rush.

Additionally, he could try out how many electrical appliances he could run simultaneously with the generator or what he needed for a life apart from a town, which was fun in itself.

“I still have a few days to spare anyway. If I think of anything useful, I can just buy it at the do-it-yourself store in the nearby town with my car. But I need to consult my remaining funds about it…”

Although it was called close, the nearest town was a two-hour drive by car away, but that was still tolerable.

Actually Zenjirou had planned to help his uncle on the fields until he departed, but it would only be for half a day, either in the morning or the afternoon.

Even if it was only for a few days, there was no way he, a grown-up man, would sit around doing nothing when they provided him with food and a place to stay, but he had to consider his own circumstances as well.

“Okay, better make the call then. Let’s see… Wait, there aren’t any radio masts here? Uwah, then I won’t be able to use my cell unless I go all the way to the highway.”

Having settled on his future actions, Zenjirou got into his hybrid car, whose grey paint was sullied by mud and dust, to make a call to the moving service and the manager of the storage room.

* * *

The time to prepare went by in an instant.

It had been exactly one month since the day he made the promise with Aura.

The shabby hut with the zinc roof stood isolated on the mountain draped with morning dew.

Inside that tattered hut, Zenjirou sat in the middle of the magic carpet and waited for the right time.

To sum it up in one word, he looked “ridiculous”.

Right now, he wore a grey suit and shouldered a big backpack on his back like one used only for professional mountain climbing.

That alone made him look pretty suspicious already, yet he also held a box cutter in his right hand like a sword and upheld the tip of his small finger on his left hand.

Calling this “suspicious” was still sugar-coating it.

“Any moment now? Nah, not yet. …Maybe it was all just a dream? No, no, that can’t be. I DO have the ring and the carpet. …But I guess something unexpected could’ve happened and they abandoned the idea of re-summoning me?”

He had continued to spill blood on the carpet by periodically pecking at the wound on his left little finger with the box cutter in his right hand, and was now driven by an immense anxiety.

All preparations for crossing over to the other world were already done.

He had quit his company, cancelled all essential utilities like gas, water, phone line and electricity and moved out of his apartment. Only his contract for his cell phone was still effective, but he had taken measure that it would cancel by the end of month too.

To his only blood-relatives, the family of his uncle, he told the lie "I'm going overseas for a job transfer".

The entry in his registration certification was changed back from his working place to his hometown too.

His bank and post accounts remained, so his last pay check would be added to it on the 10th next month, but Zenjirou himself wouldn't be able to use that money. He shouldn't be able to. If he were to, it would be troubling.

If in the worst case, the summoning didn't happen, Zenjirou would end up wandering about homeless with nothing but his hydropower generator, which was nearly useless in modern Japan, and a ridiculous long extension cord in hand after he did all these preparations.

To be honest, if he wasn't summoned now, his life was pretty much ruined.

"Shit, I'm getting dizzy. Did I lose to much blood?"

Zenjirou muttered this as he was under impression that his sight turned dark, but that wasn't possible. The amount of blood he had lost so far wasn't even a tenth of a blood sample in the hospital.

His dizziness and narrowed vision had a mental origin.

While it was already summer, the temperature was rather low in the mountain, given that it was still morning.

"…So cold."

Zenjirou was befallen by a shiver, not knowing if it was from the cold or his nervousness.

"Did I pack everything? The generator… The water tank part, the control system part. The supply and drainage hoses. Okay, everything's there."

In an attempt to distract himself form the shiver, he checked the all important "micro hydropower generator" by pointing at each part.

Yesterday, it took him the whole day and a lot of effort to carry them onto the carpet.

Zenjirou wanted to be praised by someone especially for the effort of carrying the 75kg generator part into the hut all by himself.

Simply for that, he had bought a handbarrow at the do-it-yourself store, but without it, he would have never get it done by himself.

The technicians had stabilized the rectangle generator part with stakes on the levelled mountainous ground. By the time he had pulled out these stakes one by one while looking out for not letting the part collapse, and slipped the handbarrow underneath it, the T-shirt and boxers under his blue tracksuit were soaking wet.

But thanks to that effort, the full "micro hydropower generator" stood now on top of the magic carpet.

Excluding the five-door refrigerator, it was the biggest item amongst his luggage.

"In the end, I could only buy Aura-san some alcohol in addition to the rings, but that should suffice, I guess. She seemed to like alcohol."

In the corner of the carpet were bottles of brandy, whiskey, wine and sake lined up.

Speaking of alcohol, Zenjirou usually only drunk low-malt beer or in extremely rare cases a 1500 yen whisky, so he would consider buying a bottle for the price of ten to twenty-thousand yen insane, but for a present for a Queen, he needed to invest at least that much.

That reminded him that the other world only had low percentage plum liquor, so he had bought a domestic still in a hurry, but he hadn't tested yet if he could properly make distilled liquor with it.

Well, it would be a good bargain if he succeeded.

Either way, he had bought low-malt beer and a suited local whiskey by the boxful, which should last for a while.

Next up, Zenjirou checked his current attire.

“This looks good enough… Well, even if it doesn’t, I don’t have any better clothes.”

The grey suit he currently wore were the priciest clothes in his collection, one’s best suit so to speak. After all, he was going to his wedding. Even if the cultures were different and his partner was from a different world, he had to dress appropriate in his own way.

At first he considered getting a white suit like the bridegroom wore during the reception, but its ridiculous price put an end to his idea at once. It clearly crossed the limit of warrantable expenses for clothes that would be worn only once.

As Zenjirou was short on assets, he could only prepare the most decent attire from his collection.

And as he was checking out his attire, he noticed that the belt from the backpack on his back wrinkled his suit.

“Uwah, not good. Will I be even able to fix that in the other world? Still, I don’t have the courage to leave it behind just because of that. I just gotta live with it.”

His backpack was filled with a change of clothes, sturdy tramping boots, several rechargeable AA batteries and a solar charger for them. Furthermore, there was dry bread, chocolate chip biscuits, bars of chocolate, water pet bottles, a dozen lighters and tool knifes, a dynamo LED lantern and a heat insulating blanket. In short, the contents were kind of an “emergency pack”.

When he thought of unforeseen incidents like being summoned to the wrong place or time or if the magic of the carpet failed and only his belongings on his body were transferred, he didn’t feel like putting the backpack down on the carpet at all, even if it wrinkled his suit a bit.

Of course, the most important item, the ring for Aura, was safely tucked into the inside pocket of his suit together with its box.

Suddenly Zenjirou itched for checking on the ring in his pocket again.

However, his right hand was still occupied with the box cutter and the little finger of his left hand was bleeding even now.

Zenjirou considered putting down the box cutter for now and look into his inside pocket. At that very moment.

“Guh…!?”

A familiar feeling of drunkenness befell Zenjirou sitting on top of the carpet.

He immediately threw the box cutter away and put both his hands down on the carpet. Then he heard a “clank” noise from his right and in the next moment, the appealing voice of a female, which he hadn’t heard for a month, came from above his head.

“I welcome you, my future husband. I am glad the second summoning went well. Now I can finally say this with all sincerity:

Welcome to this world, to my country. I am glad to see you, my lifelong partner.”

“Aura-san…”

Zenjirou had perfectly transferred along with the carpet and forgetting to stand up, he looked up at the Queen, who spread her arms welcoming, while he still was on his knees like a fool.

Chapter 03: Marriage, followed by the Life of Newly-weds

It had been a couple of minutes since Yamai Zenjirou safely transferred over to the different world.

Dressed as he was, Zenjirou was escorted to the inner palace.

All the luggage he bought with him would apparently be carried to the inner palace later by the reliable castle guards.

That meant not only everything on top of the magic carpet, but also the backpack he had shouldered.

It was too obvious what they intended to do, but as Zenjirou understood that it was only natural from their point of view, he entrusted his luggage to the guards without complaining.

Needless to say, he still reminded them explicitly about being extra careful with the electrical appliances such as the hydropower generator on the hand barrow, the refrigerator, the air conditioning or the floor lamps, telling them that were fragile and pointing at each of them.

“Of course they want to check if there’s anything dangerous when I suddenly bring a lot of strange stuff into the palace.”

Zenjirou muttered, then slumped into the beautifully woven wooden chair.

In the worst case, they would judge the appliance as dangerous and dispose of them, but Zenjirou remained optimistic. After all he somehow or another had Aura’s, the Queen’s permission to bring these goods with him.

Even if they should identify one of the goods to be dangerous by mistake, he surely would be given a chance to explain it in person.

“I think I refrained from bringing anything they would mistaken as something dangerous or strange, but you never know, it’s a different world after all…”

All said and done, he was still worried as he sighed, temporarily stood up from the chair, took off his jacket as if he was remembering something and hung it over the backrest of the chair.

Then he pulled on the knot of his necktie with his index finger, liberating his throat with a jerk, and undid the top button of his white shirt.

“…Fuh.”

Now he felt a bit better.

This world was indeed hot. In Japan it had already been the beginning of summer, so the temperatures now and then raised above thirty degree in the noon, but here it felt more like Japan’s midsummer— temperatures of thirty-five and above.

“I can still stand this heat, but if it gets any hotter, I’m not so confident any more.”

Zenjirou told himself that it was necessary to find counter-measures against this heat at once after all. At that very moment, a knock resounded on the door and a voice followed afterwards.

“Excuse me, Zenjirou-sama.”

“Yes.”

Zenjirou was surprised for a moment as it was the calm voice of an unfamiliar woman, but he somehow managed to reply without showing any of his surprise.

“I would like to introduce the waiting maids of the inner palace. May I ask a bit of your time, Zenjirou-sama?”

“….Ehm.”

For a moment, Zenjirou was stumped for an answer, but there obviously was no reason to decline right now.

Whilst his actions were restricted right now, he wasn't all that concerned about it due to the nervousness from having transferred to a different world, and hadn't anything to do anyway, leaving him incredible bored.

"Yes, come in."

He reflexively sprung up form his chair, then invited the waiting maids on the other side of the door in.

After his consent, more than ten waiting maids entered the room one after another.

All the waiting maids basically wore the same style of clothing, albeit for small differences.

Their clothes with white and ruby as its predominant colours, could be passed off as unique maid clothes, but it might be easier to understand to describe them as an arrangement of a half-sleeved top from India or Middle East with a miniskirt. Especially the shawl-like cloth around their heads reminded one of the typical Indian garment, the sari.

At least the wardrobe was so refined that even Zenjirou, knowing nothing about fashion, was charmed by them at once.

The waiting maids single-minded formed three rows in front of Zenjirou as if they had decided on the order beforehand, and stood still.

Nine young waiting maids lined up next to each other in the rear row, whereas four waiting maids in their 30s and 40s made up the middle row.

And at the very front stood a single slender waiting maid, near her 40s, like a representative of them and spoke.

"Then allow me to introduce all of the waiting maids that will take care of you from now on, Zenjirou-sama.

First of all, I am Amanda, the supervisory maid in charge of all the attendants in the inner palace. I am responsible for everyone in your residence, the inner palace, so please come to me when there is anything troubling you."

Saying so, the frontmost waiting maid— the supervisory maid Amanda bowed politely.

Her tone and brisk behaviour gave her the aura of a "capable woman".

Needless to say, it wasn't just an aura. All the women serving in the inner palace had to be competent.

(Man, I bet rectangle glasses would look quite good on her.)

Zenjirou automatically harboured this impolite impression.

He pictured her like the strict "dormitory superintendent" of a female boarding school he had read about in a girl's manga long ago.

"Amanda-san, okay. Nice to meet you."

Upon his answer, the supervisory maid Amanda contorted her face for a moment as if she wanted to say something, but immediately looked serious again, bowing politely.

"…Yes, Zenjirou-sama."

In the world of business, Zenjirou had learned to read his opponent's mental state from their expression to a certain extent, so he noticed superiority maid Amanda's reaction.

(Mh? Was I a bit too polite? I'm technically the master here and Amanda-san an attendant.)

To humble himself when meeting someone without an accurate grasp of their relationship, was a Japanese's principle, but now that he thought about it, here in the different world, in this kingdom, he was royalty.

When he was too polite, it could lead to confusion instead.

On a closer look, even the other waiting maids, standing behind the supervisory maid, showed more or less expressions of surprise and bewilderment.

Seemingly his manner of speaking had been a poor choice indeed.

The reason they hesitated to rebuke him with “You do not need to address us like that, Zenjirou-sama” was because of their different standings as royalty and attendants?

If so, then it was troubling for him. As someone from a different world, he didn’t know left from right here, so if no one pointed out his mistakes to him, he would always remain ignorant to affairs in this world.

(…Guess I’ll consult with Aura-san later.)

While such thoughts crossed his mind, the supervisory maid Amanda continued the introductions.

“Next up I will introduce the heads of each department. First off, the one in charge of cleaning, Ines.”

“My name is Ines.”

A waiting maid on the right in the second row stepped forward and bowed deeply.

“The next in line is Vanessa, in charge of cooking.”

“My name is Vanessa. Please leave the kitchen to me.”

“Going on, we have Emilia, in charge of gardening.”

“It is a pleasure to meet you, Zenjirou-sama.”

“Lastly, there is Olsha, in charge of bathing.”

“My name is Olsha. Please feel free to call out to me whenever you are taking a bath, Zenjirou-sama.”

“These four are the important responsible parties in the inner palace.”

“At your service.”

On supervisory maid Amanda’s words, the introduced four lowered their heads in unison.

“O- Okay. Likewi… no, I mean… I am looking forwa… no, I’m expecting you to work hard.”

Zenjirou unconsciously was about to reply polite again, but corrected his tone stammering to sound as exalted as possible.

To him it seemed unnecessary haughty and would make him laugh out loud, but apparently it was the correct attitude.

The waiting maids bowed with “Understood”, obviously relieved.

Seeing them like that, Zenjirou felt like holding his head in his hands.

(Uwah, seems this kind of tone is appropriate after all. I’ve to consult Aura-san later on about how to correctly deal with the attendants.)

Ignorant to Zenjirou’s inner conflict, the supervisory maid Amanda proceeded with the introductions.

“Now we have the nine waiting maids in the back. They will be responsible for any other immediate jobs. Please order them directly for any minor issues instead of involving the department heads or me. There are various others maids for miscellaneous tasks, but these nine will always be available for your summoning.

Girls, introduce yourselves.”

Upon her urging, the nine waiting maids in the third row started to introduce themselves one after another.

“My name is Karina. Please order me anything, Zenjirou-sama.”

“I am Keyshia.”

“Kristel is my name.”

“I am Kate…”

At this point, Zenjirou’s only average memory power reached its limit.

The supervisory maid plus the four department heads. For a total of five people, he somehow kept up his will-power to remember their names and faces, but had he known that there would be nine more, he would’ve raised the white flag from the start.

“…My name is Dolores. I will do my best to serve you whole-heartedly, Zenjirou-sama.”

By the time the nine waiting maids finished their simple self-introduction, Zenjirou had abandoned any plans to remember the names and faces of everyone present.

(Oh well. I'll get to remember them anyway while we're together in the inner palace. For now I'll just keep the names of the important ones in mind, like the supervisory maid and the department heads.)

Zenjirou had his fare share of visiting companies for business, so he wasn't exactly bad at remembering faces or names, but thirteen people at once was certainly impossible.

He had only vague recollections for everyone but the supervisory maid and the department heads.

(At any rate…)

Watching the thirteen waiting maids, Zenjirou thought to himself.

(They perfectly fit into two categories. Maybe there are two acceptance criteria? Capable and good-looking.)

The waiting maids in front of him fit so well into two general categories that he inadvertently suspected that.

To put it bluntly: "old and not very pretty waiting maids" and "young and pretty waiting maids".

Needless to say, supervisory maid Amanda and the four department heads belonged to the "old and not very pretty" category, whereas the other nine lower-ranked waiting maids belonged to the "young and pretty" one.

Supervisory maid Amanda and the cleaning department head Ines were still slender, but the remaining three department heads were all middle-aged women with plenty of flesh on their abdomen, the typical "middle-aged spread".

On the other hand, amongst the nine waiting maids, introduced as their subordinates, was not a single one that a dwindled style like that.

Zenjirou's impression of capable and good-looking ones might not necessarily be wrong.

However, the nine of them were all different from each other. Their looks for example: One was suitable to be called "cute", another one would deserve the description "pretty".

There were tall ones as there were short ones. Just as some had a big bust, others had a small one.

Only one girl had short hair, maybe due to cultural restrictions, but the hairstyles of the others were extremely varied and wide-ranged.

But it couldn't be Zenjirou's imagination that overall, there were more taller girls than short ones and more girls with big busts than ones with small busts. Especially in regards to busts, seven out of nine prided themselves with a size of "huge breasts".

Amongst them, one exceptional person even boasted of a size bigger than Aura.

(Reminds me, Aura-san too has a rather tall figure and big breasts by Japanese standards. Maybe women in this country tend to be taller and have bigger breasts compared to the Japanese average?)

Zenjirou forced his gaze to fixate upward, so it wouldn't wander over the waiting maids' breasts, while he pondered like that, but reality was different.

These young waiting maidens were carefully chosen by Aura as "girls, who Zenjirou could safely put his hands on in the near future".

There were more tall girls because he had expressed a large interest towards the tall Aura. The majority of big-breasted girls was based on Zenjirou's staring at Aura's voluminous breasts when they dined together before.

In other words, Zenjirou's assumption that the young waiting maids were chosen based on "good looks" was absolutely correct.

Naturally, they were carefully picked from a range of people with skills appropriate for the inner palace through the added criteria "looks".

Zenjirou, not knowing anything about that, had no time to admire these beautiful maids as he was mostly preoccupied with the nervousness of having arrived in the different world not long ago.

"Okay. I expect all of you to work hard."

All that was on his mind was to “get this over with safely”.

* * *

While Zenjirou, who had gone ahead to the inner palace, was hard pressed from the unfamiliar interaction with the waiting maids, Carpa’s Queen Aura the First had her subordinates check the “dowry tools” that Zenjirou brought along, one by one in a chamber of the palace.

“Open everything and examine it closely. However, when you cannot open it, do not force it and just put a mark on it. I will enquire of Zenjirou-dono about it personally later on. Bring any dangerous or strange objects to me without exception.”

“Yes, Your Highness!”

“Understood.”

The soldiers clad in white leather armours and the waiting maids wearing white aprons over their exotic maid clothes, obeyed the Queen’s order and started to open Zenjirou’s luggage carefully.

One opened the five-door refrigerator from top to bottom and checked the inside by sticking the head in. One tried to look inside the air conditioning with a puzzled look. One opened the half-transparent plastic box with clothes, spread all of Zenjirou’s T-shirts and boxer shorts one by one and folded them again.

The soldiers and waiting maids worked all around the room with pooled forces.

A great amount of “suspicious objects” was suddenly brought into the palace. It had to be checked, but it belonged to the future husband of the Queen.

As to not to damage or dirty the goods by chance, the work was conducted with incredible caution.

Due to that, there were ten people assigned to it, yet there was little progress.

Nevertheless, their task continued and one person, having spotted something of concern, reported to Aura.

“Your Highness, the contents in these transparent containers seem to be alcohol. It has a unique seal, so we do not know how to open it, but we can confirm an alcoholic smell from the broken ones.”

The bottles of alcohol, which Zenjirou brought with him as a present for Aura, must have fallen over from the summoning. One bottle of each the Japanese sake and wine, which had relatively thin bottles, were broken and their contents had soaked into the carpet.

Needless to say, Aura had noticed that there was alcohol amongst Zenjirou’s luggage from the smell, so she nodded short.

“Take the remaining bottles into the wine cellar underground. And bring the broken ones over here. Ah, be careful with the handling. These containers seem so fragile that you cannot even compare them to wooden barrels.”

She ordered the soldiers and waiting maids.

“Yes, Your Highness.”

“Understood.”

The soldiers carefully carried each bottle with both hands and left the room with them. Meanwhile the waiting maids picked up the broken bottles and held them out to Aura.

It were the white shaded bottle of Japanese sake and the transparent bottle of dark red wine. Receiving the two broken pieces, Aura looked through them at the sun shining in from the window and raised a surprised voice.

“…Marvelous. It looks like it is made out of crystal. Is such a tool common in the world of my future husband?”

The Carpa Kingdom did not know of glass manufacture.

The set of bottles made on modern Earth seemed more like work of art than tools to the people of this world. Even more so for the bottles of whiskey and brandy, which had an elaborated design.

“Your Highness, this appears to be tableware. The glasses and plates are not made out of wood or silver either, but out of the same transparent material as the alcohol containers and some brilliant stone. A few of them also broke during the summoning.”

The tableware Zenjirou brought along was an average porcelain set from Japan and the wine or whiskey glasses were all out of glass.

Zenjirou especially brought these fragile things with him, since he noticed on his previous dinner here that all the tableware was made out of wood or silver.

It didn’t bother him so much that he would point it out, but as he was used to porcelain and glass tableware, it definitely felt a bit strange to him.

And while he didn’t notice it himself, the main reason for his strange feeling were the jars for water or alcohol.

Silver didn’t rub off on the flavour as much as other metals, but that didn’t mean it was completely tasteless.

Zenjirou didn’t feel as uncomfortable with the forks or spoons, since they were made out of stainless steel in Japan too, but it was different for the jars.

For example, it was the same difference in flavour one experienced when drinking the same tea from either a pet bottle, a can or a glass cup.

When Aura picked up the transparent, colourless wine glass, she clicked her fingers with a snap.

“This is impressive as well. It would make a good present for nobles with a fancy for collecting artefacts.”

Of course these belonged to Zenjirou and Aura, even if she was his wife, had no right to do with them as she pleased. However, her future husband was an understanding and kind person. If she were to ask him, he would surely oblige her.

Aura shook her head as she was already picturing the ensnared face of the nobles, and turned her thoughts back onto the current situation.

“Did you find anything else?”

“Yes, Your Highness. Please look at this. We believe that these might be ‘weapons’.”

Saying so, the soldiers brought over a long, blue rectangle box with metallic sticks, a small pouch with many small, twisted nails and a strange edged object that had an inward blade at the tip.

“Let me see. Mhm… No, that are not weapons. They are most likely some kind of tools. For weapons, they are too impractical.”

Aura replied after looking at the “screwdriver set”, “screws” and “pipe cutter” that she received.

These tools were all needed to assemble the air conditioning. There were a lot of other tools unknown to a resident of this world lined up, like a “percussion drill”, a “vacuum pump” or “vacuum gauge”, and with this complete set, it was possible to set-up the air conditioning.

However, that only applied to professionals.

From his research on the internet, Zenjirou learned that an amateur had hardly any chance to assemble an air conditioning with just a manual, but at that time, he had already bought the large air conditioning.

He had brought a printed version of the whole assembly instruction from the homepage with him and had no intention to give up his “air conditioned lifestyle in the different world”, but considering that he quickly purchased an “electric fan” and a “metal basin big enough for the freezer” afterwards, he hadn’t lost his touch with reality entirely.

Next up, a soldier carrying a device of unknown utilization stepped forward in front of Aura.

“Your Highness, I would say that this is a weapon. Please take a look. On a first glance, it appears to be a simple box, but there are various blades inside and they quickly turn when you spin the bar on the side.”

“Oho, quite intriguing. An interesting mechanism indeed. However, I doubt that it is a weapon. How would you attack someone with it?”

“Spin the bar after you put your opponent’s hand inside… Maybe?”

The soldier's words fizzled out, as he noticed the incredibility of them midway in his sentence, and Aura gave him a wry smile.

"Then it is not a weapon, but an instrument of torture. Well, depending on its utilisation it might prove dangerous, but it surely was not built with the intention to harm. Put it back."

"Yes."

Zenjirou's "ice crusher", nearly labelled as an ignominious instrument of torture or weapon, was safely put back into place.

Even after that, the discoveries of unknown objects, like the supply of soap, the toothbrushes or mosquito coil, continued.

In appearance at least, the various LED floor lamps of the same model resembled the large candle stands of this world, so the usage could vaguely be guessed, but there was no place to put a candle or oil pan, so they remained mysterious objects in the end.

In the meantime, not only the things on the carpet were checked, but a waiting maid also confirmed the contents of the backpack that Zenjirou had shouldered, and she approached Aura with the open backpack in one hand.

"Your Highness, the contents in here mainly consist of water, food, a blanket and a change of clothes."

"Water and food? …Oh, I see. I guess he prepared it for any kind of emergencies. After all, I missed out on explaining to him what happens when my summoning fails."

When the summoning failed, the magic itself wouldn't activate. Therefore Zenjirou's precaution was completely unnecessary, but if anything, Aura was at fault here.

"Not good. I made my future husband worry unnecessarily. I have to apologize later. …Mh? What is the matter? Is there something else?"

Aura noticed the strange behaviour of the waiting maid, who was pale in the face, with the backpack and asked her.

The waiting maid, still pale, answered "Y- Yes" with a small voice.

"P- Please look at this."

Saying so, she pulled out two small pouches from the side pocket of the backpack and held it out to Aura.

"Oh, this is…!?"

After casually opening the pouches and looking inside, Aura opened her reddish brown eyes wide and became speechless.

One of the two pouches Aura had opened, was filled with colourful, transparent jewels of the size of a fingertip, the other one had countless small grains, radiating in various colours, with a hole in the middle.

To put simply, it were "marbles" and "beads".

This too was one of Zenjirou's "countermeasures against unforeseen happenings".

For the unlikely event of being transferred to somewhere else in the different world than the palace, Zenjirou had brooded about an item that wasn't bulky and could easily be traded for money in the other world, resulting in "marbles" and "breads" as his choice.

Zenjirou had chosen them as he remembered that the palace had not a single window with glass or jar out of glass, but it felt to him like he was treating the people here as "natives from a backward region", which wasn't all too pleasant.

However, he had no alternatives. If a single marble could bring a room at an inn for a night and a couple of beads could be traded for a meal, he couldn't ask for more. At the very least, Zenjirou had imagined that, but it has to be stated that the actual value was vastly different.

Even if they were "toys" in modern Japan, these glass pearls with a perfectly round shape that visible air bubbles could hardly ever achieve, had not the value of "some small change" as Zenjirou imagined them to be.

Frankly said, they were treated as “jewels”.

In fact, a kind of glass pearls known as glass beads were traded for over one million yen per piece due to its historical value even on Earth.

Of course the marbles and beads from Zenjirou weren’t that valuable. They were nothing but toys, costing a few hundred yen per bag, but this world didn’t know of glass manufacture, so their value exceeded Zenjirou’s guess by far.

“Carefully put them back.”

“Y- Yes…!”

Receiving the order, the waiting maid took the two pouches from Aura’s hands and put them back into the pocket of the backpack with a caution like handling explosive.

The long check of Zenjirou’s luggage finally reached the final stage. By the time the number of soldiers and waiting maids standing near the wall as not to disturb the others, exceeded the number of people still working, Aura addressed everyone.

“Do you have nothing to report anymore?”

She had received reports about most of the goods already.

So Aura asked just in case while she was already half-sure that there were no more reports, and shifted her gaze towards a soldier that was opening a clothing case. At that moment.

The watched soldier obviously trembled his body with a shiver and quickly tried to put what he held back into the case.

“Wait! What are you hiding there!? Stay put and slowly take your right hand out of the case!!”

Catching him, Aura raised a sharp voice.

(What was that? Did he sneak in some poison or so into my future husband’s belongings?)

The imperial guards here had gone through very strict selections, but was there a traitor amongst them?

Aura shot the suspicious soldier a fierce and stern look.

“Y- Your Highness! I did nothing wrong…!”

“Keep your excuses for yourself! I am telling you to be quiet and remove your hand.”

The soldier started to explain surprised, whereas Aura shouted at him with a fierce rebuke.

“…Yes.”

As he figured that it would be in vain to protest in light of Aura’s threatening attitude, the soldier slowly pulled out his right hand from the clothing case.

Just as Aura had suspected, there was a brilliant red cloth in his hand.

“What is that? Turn around and spread the cloth with both your hands.”

“Y- Your Highness, this, uhm…”

“Do it.”

Aura ordered the soldier, who tried to oppose even now, with an overwhelming voice.

Preparing for any eventualities, the other soldiers, watching the course of events, took their short shields leaning against the wall, and swords in hand and surrounded the interrogated soldier at a distance.

The waiting maids stopped their work for the moment and retreated towards the wall, hiding behind the embattled soldiers.

“…..”

A tense atmosphere. A painful silence. Someone could be heard swallowing their saliva with a gulp from all the tension.

With the attention of everyone in the room on him, the soldier made a big sigh like giving up on something precious and widely spread the cloth in his right hand in front of the Queen.

It was a thin, red “negligee”. Needless to say, for a woman.

“…..”

Aura stared at the averted face of the soldier through that red cloth. Yes, “through the cloth”. The soldier’s expression was visible to Aura through the cloth he held up in front of his face.

The kind of clothes from which you couldn’t expect any protection against the gazes of others.

“……”

Remaining silent, Aura kept staring at the transparent negligee for a very long time, then slowly questioned the soldier.

“That was in my future husband’s clothing case?”

As he couldn’t lie to the Queen he had sworn loyalty to, the imperial guard answered short and precise.

“…Yes.”

“…..”

The atmosphere slackened, but the silence was still painful. Someone could be heard swallowing their saliva with a gulp from sexual excitement.

Amidst that, Aura had initially cast her eyes down to endure something, but she reached her limit at last and broke the silence with a burst of laughter.

“Kukuku… I see now. Well, forgive me. I falsely suspected you.”

The Queen, having doubted her soldier, admitted her own mistake and gave him an apology.

“No, I am yours to command.”

As a soldier, he could only reply with that. On closer consideration, he had tried to suddenly hide something from the Queen’s eyes. It was only natural that he was doubted.

Anyway, what a disaster.

Lascivious clothes, obviously for a woman, were found in the belongings of the Prince consort.

It didn’t need a genius to figure out to whom the owner of these clothes wanted to give them and for what reason.

“I deeply apologize for behaving so rashly and raising suspicion.”

Still holding the transparent negligee in his right hand, the soldier lowered his head faithful, which only stimulated Aura’s laughter even more.

“It is fine. Do not let it bother you. Like I said before, it was my mistake, so let bygones be bygones. Still, I see, my future husband had such a piece. …Kukuku.”

Aura continued to laugh even now with her shoulders trembling. Tears dwelled up in her eyes from laughing too much and she wiped them away, muttering.

“My future husband is a ‘man’, too after all.”

Despite being in front of her subordinators, Aura kept being convulsed in laughter all over.

* * *

Evening on the same day.

In one chamber of the inner palace, to where all of his belongings were carried, Zenjirou sat on a black leather couch, a paradigm for luxury, across from Aura.

“So all my things are allowed into the inner palace?”

Aura had told him the result of the check, so Zenjirou showed an obvious relief on his face while he confirmed it.

“Yes. There are a few objects that need verification about their utilisation, but everything should be here by tomorrow. Except, I took the liberty to store the alcohol in the wine cellar already.”

Queen Aura, calmly crossing her legs across from him, replied so with a generous nod.

The bright red light of the setting sun shining through the open window dyed the Queen’s red hair even redder.

Captured by her appearance, Zenjirou voiced the question he suddenly thought of.

“Sure, I don’t mind. The alcohol would only spoil if it was kept here. But who ‘brings the goods here’? If I remember correctly, ‘no males are allowed’ in the inner palace besides me, right?”

Things like the clothing box or the computer were no problem, but the two metre tall refrigerator and hydropower generator surely were beyond a woman’s strength. Maybe there was a kind of “power maid” for physical labours?

Aura shook her hand on his question and answered as if it was trifling.

“Naturally some trustworthy members of my imperial guard will handle it. While it is certainly true that ’males are banned’ from entering the inner palace, a certain flexibility of the rule is possible for temporary entry.

Otherwise we would need to employ ‘female masons’ and ‘female carpenter’ in the palace. After all, the building of the inner palace and the water fountain in the garden are not built for eternity.”

Zenjirou obediently consented with “Oh, right” to the Queen’s slightly teasing words.

No matter how the world worked, there were still matters a woman’s strength couldn’t solve by itself. If one still inflexible insisted on “no males allowed” at such a time, the inner palace would become a ridiculous and uncomfortable place.

Still, it were good news for Zenjirou. If he could get the help of other men, there was something he wanted to do as soon as possible.

“In that case, could I borrow the help of a few men on this occasion? Actually, I brought over a thing called ‘Hydropower Generator’. I want to set it up in the garden somehow and get water to…”

As the sun started to set, the palace was dimly lit and Zenjirou told Aura his undertaking while leaning forward on the couch.

* * *

The reason Yamai Zenjirou was summoned to this world was to marry Queen Aura.

For that sake, he safely transferred over to the other world and spent a night in the ridiculous huge bed in the unfamiliar inner palace. What welcomed him on the next morning was his inescapable fate of endless days with preparations for the marriage ceremony.

The ceremony was scheduled to begin in fifteen days and last for five days, all night long.

For a royal wedding, the period for both the planning and the ceremony itself were abnormally short.

The preparations had probably already started one month ago, when Zenjirou had accepted Aura's proposal, but still, that month and fifteen days only made a total of forty-four days.

It was an exceptional short period to prepare for the "marriage ceremony" of the ruling Queen.

In a kingdom as big as the Carpa Kingdom, the preparation period alone would usually be at least one year when it concerned the marriage of a direct descendent of the royal family. Royalty and nobility from home and abroad would get notified with enough time to spare and a schedule would be written out so that as much important people as possible could attend, putting up the most luxury ceremony to show off the country's prestige.

A royal wedding was more than a simple celebration. It was a suitable occasion to gather influential people from near and far, doing diplomacy behind the scenes.

However, with only one and a half month to prepare, the best they could do was to gather the influential nobility from the own country, but the royalty and nobility from other countries probably wouldn't find the time to attend. It was expected that most of them would send representatives with far lower status at best. In other words, this marriage ceremony wouldn't give a chance for secret deals. To be honest, a "wasted" opportunity.

The reason Aura tried to push through the marriage in such a short time despite knowing this, was that she feared someone would intervene if they took their sweet time.

After all, it was the first marriage ever of a Queen from the Carpa Kingdom.

As there were no precedent, they could come up with as much faults as they wanted.

It was an undeniable fact that the Queen's marriage would complicate the hierarchy and even worse, Zenjirou had inherited the royal blood strong enough so that he could pass on the "Space-Time Magic" onto the next generation even if he made a child with someone other than Aura.

If Aura's judgement was correct, Zenjirou had the potential to use the basic "Space-Time Magic" if he learned magic by the book, so his lineage was quite close to a direct descendent.

If news about Zenjirou's blood spread to the influential nobles in the country, one or two would surely come up with the audacious scheme of keeping Aura as an unpaired ruler for a while longer and putting the child between Zenjirou and their daughter next on the throne.

Aura didn't consider her political skills as so weak that she would get outmanoeuvred by such strenuous politics, but preventing any trouble from occurring to begin with was the best choice.

These speculations lead to the conclusion that their marriage ceremony had an abnormally short preparation period for a royal wedding and was inevitably "small-scale".

"…This is 'small-scale', huh."

Having heard these circumstances from Aura last night, Yamai Zenjirou unconsciously leaked that utterance.

"Mh? Did you say anything, Zenjirou-sama?"

Zenjirou sat on a chair woven from ivy and a couple of waiting maids scuttled around him, happily puzzling over colourful fabrics and dazzling jewellery that they brought over with "Not this, not this either".

As he could already tell from Aura's evening dress and the waiting maids' uniform, the Carpa Kingdom had a western-style fashion too, but apparently this culture was introduced by another country only in the recent years and public events like marriage ceremonies called for their traditional garments.

Currently, the maids were choosing the cloth for Zenjirou's turban that he would wear at the ceremony, along with a stick pin for it.

The five-day ceremony included a parade through the streets of the capital in an imperial carriage together with Aura. It was typical for noblemen of this country to wear a turban around their head when outside.

Thinking back on it, he had already run out of luck when he asked supervisory maid Amanda "What clothes would be suitable?" as he had no idea about this world's fashion and she promised "Leave everything to me".

The enthusiastic waiting maids, a lunatic look in the eyes that said "Please leave it to us", kept Zenjirou busy forever afterwards.

“No, nothing. Go on.”

“Yes, certainly.”

It had already been a little over an hour since he sat down on the chair. There was not the slightest indication that the turban selection would end any time soon. Moreover, in the back, the waiting maids in charge of the accessories he would wear on the appointed days, a “decorative bronze sword“ and a “marvellous sash“, were already waiting eagerly.

Most likely, he would spent all of today on this.

(Aura-san allowed me to borrow some soldiers, so I want to set-up the hydropower generator as soon as possible and get back to my life with electricity…)

Zenjirou sat motionless in his chair to let the maids work freely and sighed innerly.

He had only spent a single day in the inner palace so far, but this inconvenient lifestyle cut off from modern culture already threw his heart into a clear turmoil.

However, the waiting maids, unable to hear their master’s inner voice, wanted to meet his expectation as he entrusted them with everything, and selected the turban and stick pin with all their might.

Their efforts seemed to say that their master’s shame was their own, so he just couldn’t bring himself to say “I have other things to do, so don’t take so long and choose whatever works”.

“The pin of the flying dragon with rubies as eyes seems to be the best choice after all. And in my opinion, a white turban will then keep a good balance with the other wearing apparel of the day.”

They finally seemed to settle on something. Zenjirou suppressed a sigh of relief and replied with “Okay, let’s try that”.

He still didn’t feel comfortable in this atmosphere, but it was slighter better now as he didn’t have to use a forced exaggerated tone like yesterday.

After consulting with Aura last night, she approved that he, public occasions aside, may speak in a casual way inside the inner palace, but addressing the attendants with respectful speech was certainly going too far.

According to Aura, the inner palace was the private chamber of royalty and it would be putting the cart before the horse if the master exhausted himself from being considerate to the attendants.

Zenjirou was quite grateful about her Highness’ decree.

At once, he started to speak normally, mindful not to use respectful speech. The waiting maids were perplexed at first, but over time, they got used to his manner of speaking and started to talk to him in a relaxed way.

“Yes, very well. Excuse me.”

The waiting maid revealed her joy about having her idea accepted and wreathed the cloth around Zenjirou’s head with a practiced hand.

(Wow. It’s almost like magic.)

Zenjirou got that impression as he saw how the simply wide cloth was wrapped around his head in no time through the mirror on top of the table.

The waiting maid finished wreathing the turban very easily and lastly stitched it together by sticking the golden stick pin into the central part above the forehead. Then she said proudly.

“How do you like it, Zenjirou-sama?”

On her question, Zenjirou turned his head left and right numerous times in front of the mirror and affirmed the position of the turban from various angles.

“…..”

The rectangular mirror, vividly showing Zenjirou’s reflection, also reflected how the young waiting maids were rebuffed by the older maids for curiously sneaking a peek.

“…Yeah, looks good.”

Having witnessed that scene in the mirror, Zenjirou suppressed a burst of laughter and answered unaffected.

Speaking of mirrors, this world only knew of metallic mirrors such as polished silver or bronze plates and a metal jar filled with water, so the glass mirror Zenjirou brought with him must have greatly impressed them.

He had intentionally bought the mirror for shaving and tooth-brushing, so it easily reflected his face whole.

It was hard to imagine how much it would cost to make a bronze mirror as big as this, let alone a silver one. A metallic mirror didn't allow any distortions or scratches, so the price skyrocket by just increasing the size a little bit.

And above all, the reflectance of metallic and glass mirrors were in different leagues. To people, who were used to the vague reflection of a metallic mirror, it must seem like there was another world beyond the glass mirror.

"Very well. Then we will make use of this turban and stick pin for the ceremony."

The waiting maid, recovering from the rebuff, said so and the waiting maids standing in the back smiled brilliantly as to agree. When the beautiful waiting maids, except for a few, smiled in unison, it relaxed the atmosphere as much.

"Now then, I would like to move on to the selection of the sash and sword you will be wearing on your waist during the ceremony. Is that alright with you?"

"….Sure. Go ahead."

Thanks to their smiles, Zenjirou somehow managed to nod with a smile to the verdict of "being a dress-up doll for another hour".

* * *

Just like during the month before his transfer, the busy time went by in a flash.

It had been fifteen days, since Zenjirou came to the other world.

Before he knew it, he faced the very day of his marriage ceremony.

The Carpa Kingdom had a special banquet hall in the palace that was only used for "marriage ceremonies" of royalty or relative high-ranked nobles. Its name: Room of the Dragon King.

The whole floor was covered with a single carpet that showed an ancient dragon drawn in mainly red colours. Its fibers were so long that you would sink in up till your angle if you were to stand on it barefooted. A relict of the past, when people were still sitting directly on the ground.

Nowadays, after the cultural introduction of chairs and tables from the northern continent, the custom of sitting directly on the floor had vanished nearly completely, but the "seating comfort" carpets, remnants of the old times, had become an easy criterion for wealth and power.

Going by that, such a ridiculous large carpet with long fibers made the "Room of the Dragon King" more than a suitable place for holding the royal wedding ceremony.

Needless to say, only chosen nobles from houses with a certain status were allowed to set foot into this impressively vast hall.

Various round tables stood in this large hall and the nobles sat at them in their own cliques.

There didn't seem to be a strict etiquette and while the food wasn't served yet, all kinds of drinks were prepared and the nobles at their tables enjoyed some with idle talk.

The topic of their chatting was of course the stars of today's wedding ceremony: Queen Aura and the mysterious Prince Consort to-be Zenjirou.

"I must say, Her Highness is pretty daring. To think she would take a man summoned from a different world as her husband."

"Yes, indeed. I wonder what kind of man he is."

"There is no collateral royalty left in the Carpa Kingdom, so no one will oppose the marriage anyway…"

“The question is, how much magical power does he possess?”

“Rumours says, it is so much that it would not put the royal family to shame.”

“Oho!? If that is true, he is a wonderful catch.”

“Yes. Should the circumstances allow it, it is also possible that in order to spread the royal blood, other women besides Her Highness will be welcomed into the inner palace later on…”

While the nobles engaged in such talk, a young man clad in a full dress of a civil officer, appeared from the adjacent room.

The young civil officer approached the large bronze gong in the corner of the hall, took the wooden drumstick that hung next to it and swung it powerful at the center of the gong.

The loud noise silenced the people and gained their attention. The civil officer then said with a loud and clear voice.

“We will now conduct the wedding ceremony between the absolute Ruler of the ever so strong Carpa Kingdom, our compassionate and wise Queen Her Highness Aura I and His Highness Zenjirou Yamai.

Here comes the pai~r!”

These words declared Aura’s and Zenjirou’s entry.

In response, all present nobles wordless shifted their gazes to the entrance with a diligent expressions.

Now then, what kind of person would the rumoured “Queen’s husband” be?

The high nobles with their evaluating eyes and the rest with curious eyes, eagerly awaited the arrival of that very person.

Before long, a man and woman appeared in the entrance. The sunlight from the windows illuminated the path from the entrance to the altar like a walkway not by chance.

The “Room of the Dragon King” was a room optimized for marriage ceremonies by nature and the schedule too was adjusted in the way that the bridal pair would enter exactly when the sunlight shone onto the walkway.

Zenjirou took one step into the bright sunlight, resisted closing his eyes reflexively and slowly walked down the illuminated path.

(Uwah, not good. If I look around, I’ll just turn crazy from nervousness…!)

Zenjirou felt the gazes of all the dressed up nobles in the hall on him and deliberately kept his gaze only on the path in front of him.

He felt rather grateful to the bright sunlight. Thanks to it, he couldn’t see the nobles well.

Under the strong sunlight of the south continent, Aura and Zenjirou approached the altar step by step with linked arms.

Aura was dressed in a bridal gown and Zenjirou wore a black formal dress with a sash and a decorative bronze sword at his waist.

A keen observer would notice that the bridal pair paid careful attention that none of them would take the lead and advanced in perfect synchronisation.

If Aura were to take the lead, it would give the bad impression that she was a “woman holding the reins” and if Zenjirou were to take the lead, it would create the image that he was a “man taking control of the Queen”.

Royalty even had to mind to the way they walk.

However, if you didn’t pay so much attention, Aura only looked like a happy woman in a beautiful bridal gown right now.

As the bride, Aura wore a sleeveless, white dress.

Her skirt wasn’t long enough to draggle a train, even if it had a flared cuff, and had freshly-picked white flowers sewn onto it instead of lace. Some details were different, but it would pass as a “wedding dress” from Earth.

(Reminds me, the colour is always white whether it's a Japanese wedding kimono or western wedding dress)

Was it a common sense transcending even worlds, not just country borders, that made the colour white esteemed for a bridal gown? Zenjirou thought about such things to distract himself from the curious and piercing gazes from all sides at least a bit. A dressed up Aura had her right hand attached to his left arm.

As the groom, Zenjirou's attire was the traditional black ceremonial dress he brought with him just in case.

Standing next to Aura, who wore an extravagant wedding dress along with a crown as a regalia, Zenjirou looked slightly shabby, but there was a good reason for it.

The awareness that "a man was the head of the family" was deeply engraved into the people of this country and the marriage of the currently ruling Queen had no precedent.

A variety of opinions regarding Zenjirou's, the husband-to-be's attire and behaviour at the ceremony literally fluttered about and to be precise, there weren't any regulations.

Carpa's customs demanded that Zenjirou, the groom, wore more dignified clothes than Aura, the bride. However, as the current Queen, Aura had to attend the ceremony with a crown to show her sovereign right.

Although Zenjirou was the husband, if he were to dress in more dignified clothes than the Queen, it would raise question to the absoluteness of her claim of power. That said, if the groom attended in less dignified clothes than the bride, people would blame royalty for ignoring the traditions of the country.

In the end, Aura covered up the problem by making use of Zenjirou's birth in the other world, reasoning that "in respect to her husband", she allowed "the groom to dress in the appropriate clothes of his world".

The formal black clothes Zenjirou brought with him from his world would have been appropriate if he attended the ceremony as a normal guest, but weren't originally meant for the "groom" to wear. That said, only Zenjirou himself knew this, so as long as he concealed it, their story was watertight.

What weighted on his mind instead was the perfumed oil that coated his short hair and stickily parted it to one side.

The ceremony today would be held indoors the entire time, so he didn't need to wear a turban, but it actually annoyed him that his hair was waxed with the particular smelling perfumed oil in exchange for it.

(Argh, it itches and stinks. I want to wash it off in the bath as fast as possible…)

As his nervousness faded, that discomfort started to gradually eat away at his entire consciousness, beginning with the corner of his head.

While resisting the urge to scratch his head or close his eyes to the dazzling sunlight, he slowly, but steadily walked down the walkway.

The attending nobles from all over didn't focus their attention onto the acquainted Queen Aura, but onto her future husband, whom they were seeing for the first time.

(Oho, that's him)

(He certainly has a lot of magical potential)

(Seems the "bloodline magic" will be passed on just fine)

(Not only that, we can also hope for a child that inherits the "bloodline magic" from a woman besides Her Highness)

(In that case, the inner palace will really turn into…)

(No, no, it is still too early to say that. The problem is his character)

(I heard that in the half of a month he has been here, he shut himself in the inner palace and rarely showed himself)

(You mean, he is an utilitarian husband for Aura-sama?)

(Who knows)

(If we at least knew his preferences, we would have a lead to make his acquaintance)

(This is but a rumour, but the groom seems to like a red, seen-through…)

Zenjirou concentrated his mind solely on the body warmth from Aura on his left arm as to ignore the stares from those around him, and move forward with stiff steps. The further he got, the closer the distance to the nobles got.

Like it or not, his nervousness increased from the curious gaze at point-blank range.

(Shit, I'm so nervous, I don't feel my feet anymore…!)

He couldn't even tell if he was walking on a carpet or marble floor.

Never would he've imagined that just walking straight ahead was such a difficult task.

(Damn, I'll trip! I'm royally tripping!)

Zenjirou screwed up his face and broke out in a cold sweat, but the crisis was averted by his wife-to-be next to him.

(Oh!?)

Aura noticed that he had lost his balance and pretended to hold onto his left arm with her right hand, but actually she was supporting his arm from below and kept him in balance so that he wouldn't trip.

(C- Close call…)

Aura was the current Queen, who had been exposed to public attention as a direct descendent from royalty by birth. Whereas Zenjirou on the other hand was a mere salary man with an all-too-common life up till now.

It was natural that Aura was used to such situations and he not, but it certainly felt a bit pathetic to have his bride help him with walking straight ahead.

Still, it apparently succeeded in engrossing his thoughts.

Zenjirou temporarily forgot about the gaze around him as he was preoccupied in thoughts and in some way or other, he regained the minimum balance necessary to keep walking.

The religion on the south continent was “animistic” in pretty much all countries.

Since “spirits”, giving blessings in form of “magic”, actually existed, there was no room for other religions.

Some people put their faith in the “ancient dragon race” that supposedly existed long ago, but they were a minority in the Carpa Kingdom at least.

Still, the influence of the “Animism” was hardly worth mentioning as there was no large-scale religious organisation at a supraregional level.

The main role of the priests was to held important ceremonies like this one.

“May the blessing of the spirits always be with them. Even if there should come times of hardships, listen to the voice of the ancestral spirits. The husband will protect the wife in such circumstances and the wife will support the husband in such circumstances…”

At the altar, the priest’s kind words continued forever.

These kind of “blessing speeches” didn’t seem to differ much in the different world.

Zenjirou tried listening to the “blessing”, since he thought it actually might have an effect, considering that this world knew of magic, but that wasn’t the case.

Due to his nervousness, he couldn’t follow the priest’s words well, but the “marriage ceremony” progressed smoothly even without that.

* * *

Night of the same day.

“Fuh, finally over…”

“Fufu, you certainly look exhausted. Well, same goes for me too.”

Zenjirou and Aura were sitting on couches confronting each other with a table in-between in one room of the inner palace and comforted each other’s fatigue.

After the three-hour marriage ceremony ended, they took part in another rite called “coming-out ceremony” for over two hours as the main attraction.

The marriage ceremony aimed at making their debut to the high-toned upper-class nobles, whereas the “coming-out ceremony” aimed at the middle and lower-class nobles, who couldn’t attend the former.

They simply had to wave from the balcony of the palace at the assembly in the front yard, which was conducted in form of a stand-up meal party, but doing so for two hours certainly took its toll on their stamina and willpower.

Needless to say, Zenjirou was completely exhausted right now as he wasn’t used to such festivities, but Aura was as well, since she additionally had to cover up his shortcomings.

Zenjirou had been so exhausted that he no longer had the energy left to decline the offer from the waiting maid to “help him in the bath”, which he normally would reject by all means. Or rather, it was more accurate to say that the maid in charge of baths didn’t allow him to take one by himself when she saw the drained face of her master.

While the bath in the inner palace was spacious and luxurious, it wasn’t the kind of refined place like in modern Japan.

It had no shower, nor a mirror. The marble floor looked indeed beautiful, but it was extremely slippy when wet from foam.

It was dangerous to take a bath all alone when completely exhausted.

Anyway, after somehow finishing their bath safely, Zenjirou and Aura leaned back into the couches in casual clothes, freed from the formal attire they had worn for half a day.

Aura was dressed in a red night dress with a deep slit up till her waist, whereas Zenjirou wore a white-blue striped pyjama from his world.

It were extremely affable outfits, but they had already entered into the bond of marriage.

The pair would now welcome their first night together, so there was no problem with exposing such an appearance to each other.

That said, every time Aura across from him re-crossed her legs that peeked out from the slit, Zenjirou couldn't help but get conscious of it.

Tonight, he would finally embrace this glamorous, voluptuous and beautiful woman in front of him in his arms.

(Damn. I can't tell anymore if I'm aroused or nervous)

"I- It's quite hot. Do you want to drink anything, Aura-san?"

He said so to hide his nervousness and stood up.

"Yeah, I will take a glass, since you already offered it."

"Okay. Then I'll open a wine. The red wine sadly broke in the summoning, but the white and rose wine is safe and sound."

Zenjirou headed over to the refrigerator in the corner of the room that emitted a quiet thrum. During the period of time from his transfer to this world up till now, the micro hydropower generator was set-up safely in the courtyard of the inner palace.

As expected, the generator's output was somewhat lesser compared to the time when professional assembled it in Japan, but even so, it provided enough electricity to run all the important appliances at the same time.

The refrigerator in the corner. The TV alongside the wall. And the six LED floor lamps that currently illuminated the room. At the moment, all of them functioned without any problems at the same time.

He took out a bottle of wine from the refrigerator, then fetched two vitreous glasses from the sideboard next to it and went back to the couch, where his new wife waited.

(Oh god, it's nothing to be proud of, but I haven't had a girlfriend since my second year in university. I've not the slightest clue how to create a good mood)

More precisely, his experience with women was limited to a single woman that he dated for one year, from his second year in university to his third year. Thanks to that, his age no longer equalled his time without a girlfriend and he lost his virginity, but it was an undeniable fact that he had insufficient experience with women.

"Here."

After pouring the white wine into the glasses, Zenjirou placed one in front of Aura.

Then he was about to go back to the other couch while holding the other glass, but Aura called out to him.

"Zenjirou-dono, if you do not mind, would you sit down here instead?"

Saying so, Aura tapped besides her on the couch she was sitting on.

The surprised Zenjirou answered flustered with the glass of white wine still in his hand.

"Eh? W- Well, but, that…"

"Why the hesitation? From today on, we are a genuine married couple. There is no need to be bashful about huddling together."

It felt wrong to hesitate after she said all that.

Zenjirou nodded.

"Okay. Then excuse me."

Telling so in advance, he sat down next to Aura.

Their thighs touched each other.

“…..”

“…..”

(Oh shit, this is definitely too close)

He had sat down on the couch that provided enough space for five grown-up people, in the way that their legs stuck together. It was a bit awkward, but if he dared to move now, it would seem like he was strangely sensitive to it and that would be even more awkward instead.

Like Aura had said just now, they were already a married couple. This was their private space and no reason to avoid physical contact.

(What now, I should say something…!)

While sipping on his wine, he impatiently searched for a topic, whereas Aura spoke to him in her usual relaxed manner.

“I must say, these ‘electrical appliances’ you brought along are truly fascinating. This light and this cooling, I feel like I am in the Twin Kingdom of Sharrow and Jilbell.”

Aura looked at the LED floor lamps that lightened up the room while saying that.

The floor lamps used LED light bulbs and were as tall as a person.

Zenjirou brought over eight floor lamps in total, which used three LED light bulbs each, to the different world.

At present, six were placed in the living room and two in the bedroom.

If all eighteen light bulbs were turned on, even the broad room of the inner palace could be lightened up as brightly as the night in modern Japan. Of course the light didn’t come from above and as it came from multiple sources, the covering wasn’t equal.

Right now, only two lamps near the sofa were on for creating the mood.

While Zenjirou smiled wryly about Aura’s consideration to start a topic,

“Yes, I worked hard for it. Apart from the preparations for the ceremony, I used up all my time to set-up the electrical appliances.”

he said that a bit proudly.

In reality, it was more accurate to say that all he did since he came here was just assembling the hydropower generator in the inner court and running the power cable to the room.

Needless to say, it had been Aura’s soldiers, who actually carried the generator, diverted the water from the fountain in the court to the water tank, moved away the stones in the wall and opened a hole for the cable.

However, Zenjirou had drawn a plan for transporting the generator safely, explained it and instructed the workers amidst temperatures of over 30°C every day (measured by an actual thermometer he brought with him, not by sense), which was midsummer by Japanese standards.

Considering the reason why Aura chose him as her partner, he knew that he ought to abstain from getting in touch and commanding a large group like that, but he had no choice this time. It was not something he could entrust to others.

The hydropower generator converted the energy from the falling water into electricity, so the water tank had to be placed sufficiently higher than the generator.

For that, the water tank was placed on amassed soil, but then the water wouldn’t flow into the tank from the fountain when they connected the hose.

One problem solved, the next arose. After try and errors, when they finally got a sufficient flow of water to generate the needed electricity, Zenjirou had shouted “Hell yeah!” with a guts pose, ignorant his surroundings.

But the effort had paid off and now the refrigerator, the LED lamps and his computer were operating flawless.

“It definitely seemed worth the effort. Yes, having cold alcohol is not all that bad, too.”

Aura emptied her glass with white wine in no time and put the glass back onto the table soundless.

“Fufu”

Ignorant to his nervousness or not, she took his right arm with both hands and pinched it between her cleavage, resting her head on his shoulder.

A sensation of her soft breasts enveloping his arm. A warmth on his shoulder and back of the neck from her damp and hot breathing. The sweet citrus fragrance from her red hair was the shampoo he brought over.

The soft sensation and sweet fragrance made Zenjirou dizzy.

“Ah, uh, ah, right, reminds me, what is that ‘Twin Kingdom’ you mentioned earlier? Is it the same as this country?”

Aura raised a chuckle from the back of her throat in reaction to her husband’s flustered stuttering, then answered him sympathetic.

“Oh, the Twin Kingdom of Sharrow and Jilbell. It is a vast country in the middle of the southern continent, where two royal families, the Sharrow family with their ‘Bestowal Magic’ and the Jilbell family with their ‘Healing Magic’, exceptionally rule side by side.

The ‘Bestowal Magic’ makes it the only Kingdom, where ‘Magic Tools’ can be created, and its royal palace is illuminated by ‘Light Jewels’ at night, cooled by ‘Wind Jewels’ when it is hot and warmed by ‘Fire Jewels’ when it is cold.

Well, you will learn about these things in time. Zenjirou-dono? Something has been bothering for a while, you see.”

Aura suddenly grabbed his cheeks with her hands and turned his head into her direction.

“W- Wh- Wha- What is it, Aura-san?”

Zenjirou, unable to properly stand his ground, replied with intense stammering as he looked into Aura’s face at such a close range that the focus of his eyes was off.

“That precisely. You add a san to my name as if I were a stranger. Can you not do something about that? I doubt that you always speak like that. Previously aside, but from today on we are a married couple.

I am aware that it is unreasonable to ask you to change your attitude all of a sudden, but before long, our relationship will become accustomed to such a sense of distance.

So please, would you talk to me with a genuine tone?”

Just like Aura had pointed out, Zenjirou had deliberately used a rather formal manner of speaking. He collected himself a bit and answered.

“Now that you mention it… But I could say the same about you, Aura…-san.”

“This is my usual tone. Nor am I humbling myself. But you have a point. Calling my husband with ’Zenjirou-dono’ every time would certainly be a bit too formal.

May I plainly call you just Zenjirou, too?”

Aura asked him that with a gentle smile.

A gentle smile and earnest eyes. Without averting her gaze for even a moment, Aura silently waited for the answered from her newlywed husband.

“Ah, yes. Wait, I mean… Yeah, sure. Go ahead.”

“Thank you, Zenjirou.”

Upon his answer, Aura brightened her smile happily and called him by his name at once.

“Now you call me by my name too, Zenjirou.”

As expected from a Queen used to negotiations. She stunningly pushed her will through like a bargaining point, even though he hadn’t agreed to anything right.

Overwhelmed by it, Zenjirou answered.

“A- Aura…”

“Zenjirou.”

“Aura.”

At a range where they could feel each other’s breath, the pair brought their faces closer and called each other by their names.

Both of them were prepared to spend the night together tonight from the start.

Who approached the partner’s lips first?

“….Mm.”

“…Mh, Mm.”

Either way, their lips overlapped like it was the most natural thing ever. At the same time, Zenjirou’s arms tightly twined around Aura’s back and she put her arms around his neck.

“Mm, Mmm, Mhm…”

“Ah… Mh… Mm.”

In an affectionate embrace, their lips madly joined together.

“Aha”

“…Fuh”

They ended this long and passionate kiss nearly at the same time, too.

But while the kiss ended, the embrace didn’t.

After separating their lips, Aura placed her chin on Zenjirou’s shoulder, then hugged him more tightly and whispered into his ear with a small voice that it tickled.

“I will head to the bedroom first. Women have a lot to prepare, so follow me after you slowly counted till hundred.”

“Eh? Ah…”

Leaving these words behind, Aura slipped out of his arms and stood up from the couch.

“A- Aura?”

Zenjirou reflexively reached out his hand, so Aura looked over her shoulder and showed him a bewitching smile.

“Fear not, I will not flee. So count until hundred, okay?”

With these last words, she disappeared in the bedroom next-door.

“…Fuh”

Aura, going ahead into the bedroom, closed the door behind her and took a deep breath first of all. Then she went straight to the side of the bed and turned on the LED floor lamp there.

Zenjirou had taught her how to do it, but when she turned on the lights by herself, it filled her with admiration once again.

The LED light bulb for the bedroom wasn’t giving off the usual white, but an orange light.

According to Zenjirou, this one “suited the bedroom better”, but Aura couldn’t really tell the difference.

Amidst the orange light, Aura recalled her earlier words and behaviour, blushed her cheeks and wriggled her sinuous body.

“Th- That was rather stimulating. Do all married couples do such embarrassing, yet joyful things every night?”

Aura embraced her own body that was clad in the red nightgown.

Her heart beat fast like an alarm bell and her whole body, from head to toe, felt hot like it was set on fire.

“I, I hope Zenjirou-dono did not notice it. N- No, we shared such a dear embrace, so he must have noticed. …Wh- What do I do?”

She had brought it up herself before, but now she was calling him with a honorific again. That she didn’t notice it showed how agitated she was.

Well, no wonder. Aura admittedly had lived longer and survived more bloodsheds than Zenjirou, but her essential experience with the other sex was even lower than his “one case”. In other words, “zero”. An authentic virgin.

Unlike the males of royal blood, who were expected to widely spread their seed now and then, the females of royal blood were expected only to receive the seed of a better lineage into their stomachs and generally had a strong sense for chastity.

Due to that, unmarried woman of royal blood were equated with inexperienced, which was true for the majority.

In the culture of the Carpa Kingdom it was typical that the man took the lead in the relationship.

So there was no problem with telling Zenjirou the truth and entrusting her body to him, but the reason she still pretended to have to upper hand was either her dignity as the Queen or her pride as the older one.

Anyway, Aura slipped off the red night dress and was naked except for some small shorts. When she tried to get onto the king-sized bed, she suddenly noticed.

“The light… is a bit too bright.”

Even just one LED lamp illuminated the bed considerably. Accustomed to candles and oil pans, Aura couldn’t help but feel embarrassed and hesitant over welcoming her bridal night in such a bright light.

“….Mhm. I, I wonder if this will do?”

She covered the LED lamp with the red nightgown she had taken off just now.

Like she had hoped, the brightness dimmed a bit, but through the red cloth, it gave it a rather obscene atmosphere instead.

“Well, I cannot concern myself with this too much.”

If she kept thinking it over, her husband would appear.

A resolved Aura climbed onto the bed and positioned herself in the middle of it.

“Fuh, Hah… Fuh, Hah.”

Then she took deeps breaths to regulate her breathing and heartbeat, so that she would appear composed at least outwards, continuing that lovable effort for a while.

The silence was broken from a knock on the door.

“!”

“Say, can I come in now?”

Hearing her husband’s voice beyond the door, Aura took one more deep breath, then replied with her usual composed voice.

“Yes, you may come in. I am awaiting you, Zenjirou.”

“E- Excuse me then…!”

Zenjirou timidly came in through the opened door like he was sneaking into the bedroom and when he saw Aura illuminated by the orange light, he unconsciously gulped.

Aura was lying sprawled on the bed with her upper body rested on the pillow.

Her lower body was slipped under a thin cloth like a blanket made out of toweling, but he could perceive her bare body line. As for her upper body, except for the peaks of her voluminous breasts, which were barely covered by her red hair, everything was in plain view.

“Oh my, how long do you want to stand there, Zenjirou? No need to be shy. Come here. Let us spend a passionate night together.”

In Aura's behaviour as she tempted Zenjirou with a bewitching smile, was no longer a shred of the adorable agitation from earlier.

* * *

"Fuh…"

Having finished the bridal night well, Zenjirou lay down his sweaty, naked body on the bed. The copulation in this sultry night left Zenjirou's body greatly exhausted, but his mind was in high spirits.

He would go for a second round at once if their bodies were to allow it. The sexual intercourse with his new wife was such a captivating experience.

"Hah, Hah, Hah, Hah…"

On the other hand, the Queen was breathing roughly besides him with no composure to look at him.

Normally, sex was more exhausting for the man than for the woman, except for some coital positions, but the tension from her first time must have ruled out that theory.

Aura should have way more stamina than Zenjirou, but she was still groggy.

Zenjirou's manhood still stood tall, but as expected, his mind had cooled down after ejaculating once.

Even while he was captivated by his wife's erotic appearance as her extra-large breasts went up and down with every breath she took, he wouldn't dare to go for a second round right away.

Without getting up, he stretched out his hand, fetching the gauze handkerchief and orange towel he had placed there in advance.

After wiping his genital area with the handkerchief, he wiped Aura's body with the orange towel while she was still out of breath.

"Hah, Hah, Ah? Oh… Thanks."

As her sweat was wiped from her body with the fluffy towel from modern Japan, Aura finally opened her eyes a bit and thanked her husband for his devotion.

"No problem. Are you okay? Was I too rough?"

Zenjirou dried her whole body off the sweat pearls while asking that.

When he wiped her soft breasts or the captivating line of her lower parts, he was aware that the blood shot between his legs again, but he endured it for now.

Even if they were married, it would cause a little trouble if he were to challenge his exhausted wife for a second round right after they finished their first time.

Meanwhile, Aura let out sweet "Kuh" or "Hau" moans every time her nipples or private parts were wiped as her body was most likely still sensitive from the just finished act and tickled by the towel.

But by the time Zenjirou had finished wiping her whole body, Aura had recovered enough to somehow face him and talk.

"…Anyway, I guess this is the end of it?"

Turning her head towards him a little bit on the pillow, Aura asked that, whereupon Zenjirou, still reclined, rested his cheek in his hand and answered.

"Yeah, we're done, for the most part. So, how… was it?"

Zenjirou, aware now that he had been a bit rough earlier, timidly asked Aura.

Amidst the orange light, Aura showed a smile that was a mixture of a smirk and a wry smile.

"Well, what can I say. It certainly was an 'unknown sensation'. I have been through many battles, be it in war or politics, but this was a first for me.

The first time I considered 'capitulation'."

She declared with a slightly accusative tone.

“U- Ugh, ehm… Sorry.”

“No, there is no reason to apologize. I might not look like it, but I had no experience in this. But I would appreciate it if you could hold back a bit.”

“Ah, yes… I’ll do my best.”

He felt ashamed from his wife’s words, but had no confidence that he would keep his own promise.

Even this time, he didn’t have any intentions to get so excited at first. To be honest, it was quite likely he would be just as rough during their next time.

Aura intensified her wry smile as she read his inner thoughts, and shrugged her naked shoulders.

“Fuh… Oh well, this is a duty of a wife as well. Anyway, Zenjirou, you are the only man I have been with, so I cannot compare it with others and thus I am going to speak my subjective opinion.”

“Mh? Wh- What?”

He was anxious about what she would say.

“You are surprisingly ‘pushy’.”

Aura frankly described her husband’s conduct with a tone without spite.

“Agh…!”

Zenjirou couldn’t deny that when he reviewed the night act.

In the end, he didn’t object and buried his face in the sheets, writhing like an infant for a while.

“Have you calmed down?”

“…Yeah, somehow.”

After a while, Zenjirou managed to recover from begin called a “pushy pervert”, raised his head from the sheets and faced Aura again.

While he had been drowning in shame, Aura rested her cheek on her right arm lying as her mental and physical fatigue left her, and watched him very interested.

Most of her sweat had drawn back too. The temperature tonight was around 25-30°C. Sleeping naked posed no problem as long as one wiped away the sweat.

“Then shall we go to sleep? We have an early morning tomorrow.”

Looking her husband, who finally faced her, into the eyes, Aura asked for his opinion.

Their bridal night concluded without problems.

The main event of the marriage ceremony was completed today, but from tomorrow onwards, there were still other things to be done, like the parade in the imperial carriage through the streets of the capital.

They couldn’t afford to cut down on their sleeping time.

“Yeah, right…”

He must have remembered these future plans. Even while he gave the voluminous breasts of his wife a regretful look, he nodded, but then he suddenly remembered something important.

“Oh! I totally forgot!!”

“Zenjirou?”

Standing up out of the blue, Zenjirou got off the bed, so Aura called out to him surprised.

“Wait a moment, I’ll be back real quick!”

He rushed out of the bedroom with these words into the living room.

“…What was that?”

Aura, still naked, sat up on the bed and tilted her head. Shortly thereafter Zenjirou, naked too, came back from the living room.

Unlike before, he was now holding a small box of blue velvet cloth in his right hand.

Aura suddenly remembered that Zenjirou had asked her to lend him a ring for her left ring finger before he returned to his world once.

“So this is… I see.”

It was easy to guess what was inside that box once she remembered that.

Back in the room, Zenjirou pulled off Aura’s clothes from the LED lamp and the room brightened up again.

“Aura. Can you get off the bed and stand in front of me? It won’t take long.”

“Okay.”

She obediently did as he said.

Even if she already knew that she would get something, it was still exciting when it came down to it.

A different kind of excitement from the earlier contact with a man accelerated her heartbeat while she stood in front of him.

The pair, both naked, confronted each other in front of the orange LED lamp.

Zenjirou took the ring with three diamonds in the socket out of the small box.

The rite of exchanging rings.

Normally, the rite was conducted in a wedding dress and tuxedo while a priest oversaw it, but since their marriage ceremony was held in the custom of the Carpa Kingdom, he couldn’t bring it up.

Nevertheless, it would be a waste to do it after the five-day ceremony was over, so he figured that it might be a good timing to hand it over after their first night together.

With that in mind, Zenjirou came up to Aura at a distance of one step with her ring in hand.

“It’s a custom of my world. The groom and bride put rings on each other’s left ring fingers during the ceremony and swear to love each other forever. Aura, give me your left hand.”

“Okay. Like this?”

Aura obediently held out her left hand before her chest, which Zenjirou grasped with his left hand and put the ring on her ring finger with his right.

“I promise to love, respect, comfort and help you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, in wealth and in poverty, until death do us part. I take this oath on this ring.”

Along with the oath to love her forever, the ring was put onto the Queen’s left ring finger.

“—”

As the yellow-golden ring was colder than she expected, Aura shivered for a moment, but showed no other reaction to the wedding ring on her ring finger.

“Can I ask you to do the same? Here.”

“Y- Yeah, okay.”

Zenjirou now handed Aura a ring one sized bigger, but with the exactly same design as the ring on her finger.

“…..”

With the ring in hand, she remained silent for a moment as she thought about something, but before long, she put the ring on his left ringer finger in the same way he did.

“Is that alright?”

“Yeah, thank you. Now we’re done.”

Zenjirou held the ring she had put on up high against the LED lamp and smiled happily. For an Earthling, this ring exchange definitely felt more like a “wedding” than the ceremony in the different world.

At any rate, he had done what needed to be done.

“’Wedding rings’ of oath, mhm. An interesting custom. If we spread it well enough, it might become popular here as well.”

“Haha, that would be great. That would make us the first couple ever to exchange rings.”

“Yeah, that sounds sweet.”

They naturally returned to the bed in their birthday suits.

“Good night, Aura.”

“Yeah, good night. Forgive me, but I am really going to sleep. If we do it any more, it will affect tomorrow’s events.”

“I, I won’t, really! I’ll go to sleep, too.”

Aura noticed the slightly disappointed expression of her husband and considered teasing him a bit more, but if she were to do that, it would cut down their sleeping time too, so she kept her mouth shut.

“Okay, I’ll turn off the light.”

When Zenjirou turned off the LED lamp, the bedroom with the wooden door closed fell into absolute darkness.

“…Aura.”

“…Mm, Zenjirou.”

In the middle of the large bed, the naked pair naturally groped for holding hands.

The room was warm enough to disturb one’s sleep, yet their body warmth only felt strangely comfortable.

“…..”

“…..”

Before long, Aura and Zenjirou started to make quiet sleeping sounds in an embrace even if no one in particular snuggled up to the other.

Chapter 04: The Mysterious Soul of Words

The cold, electronic buzzing from his cell phone next to his pillow slowly woke up Zenjirou's consciousness from its slumber.

"Mm… Mh?"

Still half-asleep, Zenjirou reached out his right hand routinely, searched for his cell phone and turned off its morning alarm. Then he brought the cell phone close to his face and looked at the time.

5:30 AM

Compared to the time a salary man woke up in modern Japan it was rather early, but in this world it was already considered late.

In a culture, where nearly no other sources of light but natural fire existed, the daytime was a very precious period.

It was common in this world to raise after the sun came out at four in the morning and sleeping in until late was a sign of luxury.

However, there was actually no need for Zenjirou to wake up at this hour by specifically setting an alarm.

He had the LED floor lamps to illuminate the night and nothing special to do during the day.

There was but one reason that Zenjirou used the alarm function of his cell phone, the loyal partner of his salary man days, to wake up this early.

His wife— Because he didn't want to miss out on Aura.

It was a rather lonely experience to see that your wife had already gone to work when you woke up after going to bed together.

Zenjirou put the cell phone back to where it was before and turned his body to the left on the bed. There was Aura, exposing an innocent sleeping face while making peaceful sleeping sounds.

Today it had been ten days since their bridal night.

After their marriage, Zenjirou and Aura had spent their nights together here in the chamber of the inner palace.

Even yesterday, they satisfactorily completely their conjugal duty, then fell asleep right after wiping their bodies with a wet towel, so both of them were stark-naked right now.

Technically a thin blanket made of something similar to towelling covered them, but the nights in the Carpa Kingdom were so hot that even that thin blanket seemed oppressive.

"….."

Still not fully awake, Zenjirou twined his arm around his wife's back.

Embracing her with his right arm around her back while still resting sideways, Zenjirou caressing patted Aura's back with his palm.

Her heartbeat he felt on his chest and the feeling of her skin on his palm made him remember the act that was conducted nearly every night in the last ten days.

"Aura…"

He had slept with this woman.

This feeling of reality had quickly fostered his love for Aura. Zenjirou had embraced Aura so closely that her bare nipples were pressing on his chest and he caressed the back or red hair of his beloved wife numerous times with a lot of affection.

It was inevitable that Aura would wake up from that.

“Mm… Ah…? Zenjirou?”

Having woken up, Aura indulged herself in Zenjirou’s arms and docilely stuck her naked body onto his. Then she nuzzled her head against his neck like a spoilt cat and purred.

(Ah, rather than a cat, I feel like I tamed a large feline carnivore like a “lioness” or “tigress”)

Squinting from the tickling, but comfortable feeling around his neck, Zenjirou squeezed Aura tighter while such a thought crossed his mind.

People often matched women with cats, but such an adorable animal didn’t do Aura’s appeal justice.

Even a pantheress was no match for her. She displayed the aura of a supreme ruler pretty much like a tiger or lion, carnivores at the top of the food chain.

For a while then, they remained embraced naked for a while to savour the other’s body temperature, but before long, Aura slipped out of Zenjirou’s arms and got off the bed.

While freely exposing her charming body that was filled out or firm only at the places it was supposed to be, Aura wetted the towel in the pail of water that was prepared next to the bed and wiped her body.

“Fuh…”

After the act, they technically wiped their bodies before going to bed, but even then they sweated unsavoury with their embracing amidst the sultry night.

“Ah, when you’re done, give it to me. I want to wipe my body too.”

Zenjirou, who was rather pale compared to Aura, said that and got off the bed naked, then approached his wife, who was cleaning herself.

“Yes, of course. If you want, I can even do it for you? My dear Husband.”

His new wife replied with a prankish smile and Zenjirou was about to give in to the temptation for a moment, but he shook his head and answered.

“That sounds really attractive, but it’s too attractive and I don’t think I can stop midway then. Though when you tend to it from beginning to end, then I’m all in.”

“Too bad. I am afraid I have work lined up, so I do not have the time for that. Forgive me, you have to wait until tonight.”

On their first night, Zenjirou one-sidedly had his way with Aura, but in the last ten days, she quickly adapted to the night duties. And now, she had improved so much that she could respond with such frivolous talk.

After wiping her body quickly, Aura soaked the towel in the pail and wrung it out, then she tossed that towel to Zenjirou.

“Okay. Can’t wait for it. Speaking of, how’s today going to be? I mean, for meals.”

While wiping his body with the caught towel, Zenjirou asked this to Aura as he suddenly remembered.

While getting dressed, Aura

“Yeah, seems like I will not have the time to get back here for breakfast or lunch. But I might make it in time for dinner if everything goes well. Though you could also come to the palace yourself, Zenjirou, if you wish to dine together with me.”

said so and gave Zenjirou a probing glance.

Zenjirou, at the end of that glance, racked his brain at once.

(It seems likely that I’ll run into other nobility when I eat together with Aura in the palace. As clueless as I’m right now, I might cause trouble for her in an unexpected way when I talk to them carelessly.)

From her all too imposing behaviour one might forget about it, but Aura’s authority as the Queen in this patriarchic Kingdom was by no means unshakeable.

If Zenjirou should ever utter anything from his mouth that could be interpreted as criticism or complain towards Aura, she would receive plenty of detriment from just that.

(I might be overthinking, but better safe than sorry.)

“No, it’s troublesome to go all the way to the palace. I’ll rather laze around here. Ah, but I sure would like to learn about the manners and common sense of this country to an extent that it wouldn’t embarrass you soon. We can’t completely rule out that I’ll have to appear outside, too.”

That was Zenjirou’s way of saying “I’ll try not to cause you any trouble as much as possible”.

Aura understood the meaning behind his words and replied with an affectionate smile,

“I see. Then I will try to finish my work by dinner at all costs. I am sure you will be lonely all by yourself until night, but bear with it. As for manners and common sense, I could teach you about it personally, but I do not really have the time for that… Okay, I will find you a suited teacher.”

assuring him like that.

“Sorry for all the trouble.”

“Pay it no mind. I am forcing these inconveniences on you.”

Before long, Aura finished dressing and they approached each other nearly simultaneous.

“Well then, see you later.”

“Yes, see you.”

The roles as man and woman were really reversed. While smiling wry in his heart, Zenjirou exchanged a short kiss with Aura and sent off his wife with a smile as she was going to pursue her duties as a Queen.

“Now then, what do I do today?”

After sending off Aura, Zenjirou was lazing around on the couch in the living room, dressed in a T-shirt from his world and loose, white trousers without a tuck from this world over his trunks.

Ever since he came here, he had been busy with things like the marriage ceremony or setting up the generator.

His real “lifestyle of doing nothing but lazing around” only started today.

In time he might not know what to do with his free time, but at least for today, he had a mountain of things he wanted to do.

During his salary man days, he had recorded as much as he could on DVD, but never watched any of it, and bought as much games as he could without ever opening them.

He had also continued to buy the songs of the bands or singers he liked during his university days at legal download portals, more out of habit than anything, but the only time he listened to them was during commuting between home and work. There were still a lot of songs he hadn’t listened to even once.

“Guess first comes my backlog of TV series. Ah, but if I start now, it’ll coincide with breakfast.”

When it was time for breakfast, the waiting maids of the inner palace would appear.

Practically, Zenjirou was the master of the inner palace, so he could change the time for breakfast on a whim if he wanted to, but it wasn’t something to be mentioned casually.

After all, this world didn’t even know of gas stoves or water pipes, let alone microwaves. Preponing breakfast meant that the attendants had to scoop water faster and postponing meant that it had to be redone at a later time.

It wasn’t as simple as in modern Japan, where one could just reheat a prepared meal in the microwave.

“In the end, I merely married into the family. I don’t want to get on the attendants’ bad side. Let’s see, how much is left of the food I brought with me?”

Zenjirou felt a little bit hungry, so he peeked into the refrigerator.

The five-door refrigerator powered by the hydropower generator thankfully operated without problems so far.

At present, the refrigerator was filled with fruits and alcohol from this world and the rations Zenjirou brought with him from Japan.

That said, most of these rations were chocolate, dry bread, beef jerky, biscuits and the like. He had packed all these dry foods into his backpack for emergencies and there was no real meaning in putting them into the refrigerator.

The remaining rations were forced onto him by his aunt as she believed his lie about “transferring overseas”: Handmade dried plums together with some dried and buckwheat noodles from Shinshu Soba on the recommendation of his uncle.

“The chocolate are too good to eat. From what Aura told me, they don’t even know of cocoa here. It’s pretty much hopeless to make any. Luckily, they seem to have no shortage of sugar, but it’s crude brown sugar.”

Most likely, it was just a substitute product they got by wringing out and filtering the essence of sugarcane or a plant with just as much sugar content. The sugar of this world had a peculiar flavour to Zenjirou’s tongue as it was used to the first-rate sugar from Japan.

Technically he had the receipts for cakes, cookies or pudding on his computer, downloaded from a homepage with pictures to the explanations, but it was a little doubtful if he could properly make them with the sugar and wheat flour from this world.

To begin with, Zenjirou didn’t bring any hand mixer or microwave with him, so it was impossible to make sweets as easily as in modern Japan.

If he were to do it, he had no choice but to call for the waiting maid in charge of cooking and teach her the rough method.

Zenjirou had thought he had gathered the essential things as best as he could during the one month of preparation, but now that he started his life in the different world, he often found himself regretting “Why didn’t I bring that with me!”.

His greatest regret was “window glass”.

Zenjirou looked at the window, which mercilessly let the outside air through the opened wooden shutters, and all the parts of the air conditioning in the corner of the room, raising an empty voice.

“Quite the blunder. The interior in Japan’s buildings is naturally enclosed by windows, so it totally slipped my mind…”

Even if he were to assemble the air conditioning in this room without window glass, he wouldn’t get the comfortable temperature he sought. The air conditioning wouldn’t even reach half its effectiveness with the windows gaping wide open.

On the other hand, closing the shutters in the middle of the noon, cutting of the sunlight and living with just the LED lamps was certainly a bit too unhealthy. Even if he were to do that, he couldn’t hope for the architecture of this world to be as airtight as an average building in modern Japan.

All the same, it was doubtful how much the domestic air conditioning could cool down the living room, since it exceeded a size of sixty-six square metres.

“Well, it’s more likely I’ll screw up the assembling anyway, so I might as well resign myself to never having one to begin with. Hah…”

Zenjirou sighed and decided to put the matter with the air conditioning and window glass on hold for now. As a sop for his dilemma, he had figured out that when he put a block of ice, made in the refrigerator, in front of the fan, it gave a chilling in a local area more than he had expected.

“Oh well. It’s no use lamenting. I have to live with the inconveniences.”

Adopting this clear-cut attitude, Zenjirou took out a bag stuffed with DVDs from the TV stand and started to pick a show to watch for today.

“Mhm, up to where did I watch this show? I remember Solar Car going to an island where they held bullfights. I think Game of Tag vs. 100 Detectives Part 3 was the last I watched?”

* * *

While refreshing himself with the ice fan, Zenjirou enjoyed watching DVDs by himself. Meanwhile, his wife Aura pursued her duties as the Queen in her office.

Most of her duties as the leader of the country were councils and meetings.

Since the Carpa Kingdom currently had no prime minister in charge of politics and no admiral in charge of the army, Aura was extremely pressed with work as the Queen.

The little free time between councils and meetings elapsed just from looking through some submitted reports.

Aura was going through the bundle of dragonskin parchments (made from skinned hide of raptorial dragons) helter-skelter when Secretary Fabio, standing next to her, called out to her.

“Your Highness, it is time.”

Aura raised her eyes from the dragonskin parchment to the monotone voice of the middle-aged man with a slender face.

“Mh? Ahh, already time, huh. Who is next?”

As there was no precise way to measure time like in modern Japan, this world was rather loose with time. Even so, official business in the palace had an accurate take on time by measuring quarters of an hour, namely fifteens minutes.

The majority of her work had to be taken care of while the sun was out, so the Queen was as busy as a politician in modern Japan during the day.

“Yes, the next meeting is with the General of the Knights, Sir Puyol Guillén.”

Aura obviously grimaced upon hearing her secretary mentioning that name.

It was the name from one of the two candidates that were deemed to be most suited to be her husband before Zenjirou was summoned.

There was no doubt that he was a competent soldier that often distinguished himself in the previous great war at a young age, but regretfully, he was too ambitious, so Aura deemed him unfit to be her husband.

Now what would that ambitious person have to say after his position as the “Queen’s Husband” within his reach had been snatched away by someone mysterious from a different world at the last minute?

Just from imagining it, Aura inadvertently spilled a sigh.

“Your Highness, a soldier with the rank of a general and a civil officers with the rank of a cabinet member have the right to request a direct meeting with the Ruler. Sir Puyol is merely availing himself of his legitimate privilege.”

Aura’s irritation only grew stronger from the all too composed words of her secretary. Even so, Secretary Fabio was making a sound argument, which Aura thoroughly understood.

“I know. Fine, bring him inside.”

After a deep breath to blow away the irritation, she ordered with her usual dignified voice.

“Your Highness Aura, first of all, let me congratulate you again. I wish you all the very best for your marriage.”

“Thank you, Sir Puyol. It makes me feel better to hear this. We were not meant to be bound as a man and a woman, but I would like to keep our bond as ruler and subject important from now on, too.”

“…Yes, you honour me.”

The exchange between Queen Aura and General Puyol Guillén, sitting opposite one another in the office, started with obvious pleasantries.

To put in a nutshell, the man called Puyol Guillén was a stereotypical soldier.

He was one head taller than Aura, who was already tall for a woman, and had a keen and fearless face. His arm, appearing from the half-sleeves, were cluttered with scars and the palms of his big hands showed firm and big calluses from handling a sword.

Most likely a hundred people out of hundred would choose Puyol when asked who between Zenjirou and Puyol was a suitable Prince Consort for Aura based on appearance.

It even looked impressive when Aura with her red hair and light brown skin stood next to Puyol with his black hair and brown skin. And even height-wise, Puyol was taller than the average man, so he made a good balance to Aura, who was also taller than the average woman.

A skilled soldier, a competent commander and the young hero of the previous war with numerous deeds of arms.

The Hero had failed to become the Prince consort, but he faced the subject of his loyalty, the Queen and declared without beating about the bush.

“Your Highness, I believe you know already, but I have a younger sister. She inherited the royal blood, too, albeit as shallow as myself, and has high magical power. Her personality just like her education, will not embarrass her in public.

What do you say? I suggest to make her Zenjirou-sama’s concubine, to spread the royal blood of course.”

“…..”

Upon Mr. Ambitious sudden and frank proposal, Aura desperately suppressed her urge to facepalm right away.

That was the very reason. Because he was so obvious ambitious, he was extremely unsuited to be the Prince Consort, no matter how capable he was as a soldier.

Since Aura herself would never content herself with being a puppet to her husband, the Carpa Kingdom would have split into Queen and Prince Consort Factions for sure if Aura had wed Puyol, causing a national split.

Anyway, suggesting a concubine to a wife, who had only just wed, was outrageously ruthless.

Aura didn’t break her composed expression and asked back.

“Mhm, that sounds intriguing. What is your sister’s say on that matter?”

“? I am the head of the Guillén Family.”

Puyol tilted his head puzzled on Aura’s question. Practically, he was not mistaken.

The family head decided on the marriage partner for the woman. Puyol was merely making a sensible decision according to the tradition of this country.

Instead, Aura was the one against common sense, since she had lived so far by upkeeping a stereotypical turn of mind as the Queen.

That said, most family heads made allowance for their daughters or sisters’ own will when they decided their marriage partner, but Puyol apparently wanted to marry off his sister solely for his own conveniences. And he unwavering believed that it was his legitimate right to do so.

Aura realized that she had steered the topic in the wrong direction and strived to adjust it while keeping a composed smile.

“Certainly. However, my husband only came to this world recently and has not settled in yet, both emotionally and physically. As of now, he has his hands full with just me.”

Puyol squinted his sharp eyes on Aura’s clear refusal.

“…Has Zenjirou-sama truly expressed that himself?”

The question of the subject, doubting the Queen’s words, could very well be seen as disrespectful, whereat Aura threw out her chest more than necessary.

“Of course. You do not mean to say that you doubt my words?”

“Never. Excuse me. However, as one of the nobility, it is my honest desire to ‘personally’ greet my new lord Zenjirou-sama.

Can I ask you to pass that on to him ‘unaltered’?”

“…Fine. I will definitely forward it to my husband, ‘word for word’.”

“Thank you.”

At the end, Puyol saluted like a knight by bringing his right fist to his left shoulder and left the Queen's office.

Once she had confirmed that the ambitious general was no longer in range, Aura sighed deeply.

"… Good grief. His own marriage failed and he tries to send of his sister next. He makes no bones about his ambitions as ever. That is so much more refreshing."

Contrary to her words, the Queen spit them out annoyed. Secretary Fabio, standing there like a carved stature so far, replied with a flat voice.

"Still, since General Puyol is so extremely loyal to his ambitions, it helps us predict the actions of the nobility as a whole. Most likely, identical request will come rushing in the next few days. And when you continue to turn these down like just now, then a rumour saying 'Her Highness takes the freedom off her husband to preserve her own power even though she is his wife', will inevitably spread."

The secretary didn't mince matters like always, whereat Aura grimaced and objected.

"My husband decided to stay in the inner palace and not leave there by none other than his own will. I have told him nothing."

"Yes, I am aware of that. Because he is wise, virtuous for now and extremely cooperative to you outwardly. However, if even your relationship with him remains hidden in the inner palace, the nobility haunting the palace will not know about it."

The secretary made a valid point after another, whereas Aura could only sigh.

"In that case, I guess we will have my husband appear in the palace to some degree and have him assure that our relationship is going well directly from his own mouth.

I get the feeling that I am causing nothing but trouble for him."

It made her feel a bit mean to push unexpected troubles onto her Prince Consort, who showered her so honestly with love.

She really kind of felt like a wicked woman that restrained her husband's freedom for her own good.

But the secretary was oblivious to the Queen's melancholy and continued to speak without moving a muscle on his inexpressive face that looked like an iron mask.

"There is nothing else we can do. In fact, the suggestion by General Puyol for Zenjirou-sama to 'have a concubine' is more than warrantable if you consider the continuity of the royal bloodline."

"Well, yes…"

Aura had to admit the truth behind these words.

No matter how passionately Zenjirou and Aura loved each other, there was a limit to how much children a single pair could make. Not to mention, Aura had severe duties as the Queen. She couldn't afford to back out often to give birth.

"As things stand now, what is your opinion? I guess you think I should accept General Puyol's suggestion?"

Aura asked her secretary like that on a spontaneous suggestion.

The opinion of her middle-aged secretary, stressing effectiveness above everything else, served as a valuable general guideline.

Secretary Fabio shrugged his shoulders a bit upon Aura's question, then

"I have my personal view on the matter, but speaking it out might be interpreted as contempt towards the royal family. I find myself unfit to ascertain if it is something meant for your ears, Your Highness."

lowered his head with that.

But Aura turned a deaf ear to it and shook her hand, then urged him to continue."

"I do not mind. To begin with, hypocritical courtesy is the signature feature of nobility. Even if it angers me, there will be no punishment, so speak your mind."

With the permission from the Queen, the secretary bowed once with "Understood" and started to talk.

“To come right to the point, I object making General Puyo’s little sister a concubine for Zenjirou-sama.”

“Oho?”

Aura leaned forward interested upon the secretary’s unexpected straight-to-the-point words.

“Making important noblewomen, who inherit the royal blood, his concubines will appear at first as the royal family grows with the next generation and secure its future, but in fact it will be a dead-end, considering what happens in the generation after that.

After all, all of them will be siblings with Zenjirou-sama as their father, but different mothers.”

“Yes, I see now.”

Aura nodded consenting. That was indeed true. Although a lot of children would inherit the royal blood, it would make marriages arrangements extremely difficult in the generation after them as all of them were half-siblings with the same father.

Per se, the marriage between half-siblings with different mothers or fathers was allowed in the Carpa Kingdom, but it wasn’t recommended either.

A child would be born with disabilities when the blood-relation was too close. They must have figured out that fact from previous cases.

“Therefore, if you simply wish for continuing the royal bloodline, it would be the best to marry General Puyol’s little sister to your other previous husband candidate, Sir Raffaello from the Márguez Family.

And at the same time, you should welcome a suitable daughter of nobility, a magician with rich magical power, as Zenjirou-sama’s concubine to establish a branch family with thin royal blood. Then no one would have anything to complain. Zenjirou-sama’s blood is strong enough that we can hope for the child with such a woman to inherit the ’Space-Time Magic’.

Ah, needless to say, everything is under the basic prerequisite that you have a child with Zenjirou-sama yourself.”

Aura showed Secretary Fabio a tense smile for his indifferent presentation.

“It almost sounds like the marriages between the royal family and nobility are the same as crossbreeding between ‘raptorial dragons’ for you.”

The slender-faced secretary didn’t even show an reaction to her cynicism.

“Hence I told you beforehand that it would be impolite. To begin with, this is merely a standpoint for spreading the ‘Space-Time Magic’. Marriage always involves people’s feelings and if two influential noble families like the Guillén and Márguez Family were to merge through marriage, it would bring a too influential nobility into being and implicate drawbacks for the royal family.”

“I know. The one to make a final decision after looking at all the facts will be me.

…At any rate, as long as my husband does not stand in the breach of the nobility for a bit, the suspicion towards me will only grow.”

For a while, Aura was lost in thought with her hand on her chin, then suddenly raised her eyes and asked the secretary.

“Fabio, for how long can we keep the nobility’s suspicion down when my husband stays hidden in the inner palace?”

“At least one month and at best one and a half, I would say. If it is any longer, we cannot avoid rumours saying ’Her Highness put the words into his mouth’, no matter what Zenjirou-sama might say then.”

As he anticipated Aura’s question, the secretary answered fluently at once.

“One month… Well, guess so. Okay, got it. Fortunately, my husband already expressed the desire to learn about this world’s manner and common sense. Let us find him a private tutor.”

“A private tutor, you say? Though males are forbidden the entrance into the inner palace?”

On the secretary’s inquiry, Aura smiled profound.

“Of course we will advertise the vacancy for women only. And I want her to teach him the basics of magic as well, so a female magician above average would be best.”

A female tutor with high magical power. With just that, it only sounded like Aura gave her authorisation for a concubine. However, she added premonitory.

“In case there are no ‘appropriate candidates’, call for beldam. We can only hope that no one imprudent presents itself.”

Beldam was referring to the wife of the archmage Espaldion: Pascuala. She was an old woman in her 70s. If anyone still recommended a young, unmarried woman as a tutor after hearing that she was a “candidate for the private tutor”, then they were either too stupid to understand Aura’s intention or were so ambitious that they prioritized their own gain over the Queen’s request.

The middle-aged secretary shrugged his shoulders troubled a bit and advised the Queen.

“Your Highness, you will lose your subjects’ sympathy, if you bluntly put them to the test too often. Please be more careful.”

“I know. Anyway, just like you said, I cannot dismiss the idea of welcoming concubines for my husband and establishing a branch family when I think of the future. That being the case, we have to weed out ‘dangerous concubine candidates’ as quickly as possible.”

Actually, Aura was a bit reluctant about it as she was enjoying the unique newly-wed lifestyle so far. It was only natural that she got a bit sullen.

Political marriages were an obligation for the royal family. She realized that, but even someone from the royal family could fall in love and desire to monopolize it.

“Good grief, it would not hurt anyone to let me enjoy my newly-wed life for a bit without disturbances.”

Aura shrugged her shoulders in annoyance.

* * *

Evening on the same day. After finishing their dinner together, Aura and Zenjirou were cuddling relaxed on the couch.

“Mhm, even if there is the risk of staying up too late, the nightlife is quite worthwhile with this much illumination.”

“Haha, yeah. Though I’m too used to it and don’t appreciate it as much anymore.”

Watching the six LED lamps that lightened up the room, Aura said that admiring, to which Zenjirou replied with a small smile.

During the day, Aura had worked hard as the Queen, but after the sun set, she had relatively free time on her hands. Of course nighttime didn’t equal free time as she had to attend social gatherings like a dance once or twice per week, too, but her finishing time was rather “early” when comparing it to Zenjirou’s salary man days, where he worked overtime until midnight like it was a given.

Due to that, they could spent some quality time together without any disturbances like this.

Still, even though it was an relaxed evening for them, they couldn’t avoid to touch upon political matters as the Queen and her Prince Consort.

“So, you advertised a vacancy as a tutor to teach me manners and common sense?”

As he had heard the circumstances from Aura, Zenjirou confirmed it with his wife, who wore a pious expression without any surprise.

“Yes. It will take some time until employment. In the meantime, I will teach you when I have time. Actually, I would have liked to teach you everything myself, but I just do not have the time for it. Forgive me.”

“It’s fine. I understand that you’re busy. Ah, but that tutor will be understanding, right? I fear I might say something inappropriate.”

Worrying about using improper language towards the person that taught one manners and common sense was mistaking the cause for the end, but his worry was plausible.

One would expect the person chosen to be the tutor for the Queen's Prince Consort to be someone of a certain standing. If Zenjirou conducted himself improperly, unfavourable criticism might spread about him in the palace.

But Aura shook her head with a smile to Zenjirou's worry.

"No, you should be fine if you act like usually. I will give you a crash course in manners and common sense until your tutor is hired."

She purposefully said that with a bright tone to wash away his worries.

"Ahaha, go easy on me."

Zenjirou replied like that with an involuntarily wry smile. At that moment, the door of the living room was knocked.

"Ah, yes?"

"Excuse me. The bath is prepared."

Zenjirou raised his voice out of reflex, to which the a waiting maid reported with a clearly comprehensible voice from beyond the door.

"Oh? Right, the time has already come. Okay, I'll be right there."

Standing up from the couch, he took the LED lantern from the shelf.

Zenjirou had been dumbfounded how dark the bath at night was when he entered it for the first time, but now this device he had bought by going all the way to the nearby do-it-yourself store, came in handy.

Usually it required four d-cells, but he used a battery spacer to power it with rechargeable AA cells and normal AA cells instead.

Even as a layman, he knew that it would be lethal to run an extension cable into the soaked bathroom, so the only light there was this LED lantern.

Nevertheless, this LED lantern with its twenty-eight miniature LED light bulbs lightened up the bathroom to a degree, where it was still dim, but passable for his senses.

Incidentally, to quote Aura and the waiting maids on this matter: "It is unbelievable bright".

"Okay, good. I don't need to recharge yet."

After he confirmed that it lightened up alright by turning it on once, he headed for the door with the lantern in one hand.

"Well then, let us go, Zenjirou."

Aura linked arms with his free one in an all too natural manner and embraced it close to her chest.

"Ehm, do you mean, well… taking a bath together…?"

Speaking of, they were already sharing the bed, but never went into the bath together.

Zenjirou became nervous from his wife's bold temptation, whereas Aura smiled bewitching.

"As long as you are not against it."

"No, never. Not against such a charming offer."

With a lecherous face, he headed towards the bath with light steps as if walking on clouds while closely linking arms with her.

* * *

After their intimate bath together, Aura and Zenjirou cooled down their heated bodies with the ice fan while each holding a glass with their respective favourite alcohol.

For Zenjirou it was the low-malt beer he bought by the box and Aura had the rest of the white wine she had opened yesterday.

Both were cooled nicely from the refrigerator and pleasantly refreshed their dried throats after the bath.

“Fuh, I could get addicted to this.”

Aura, dressed in a light nightgown, narrowed her eyes to slits from the cold breeze of the fan through the ice and the cold white wine in the wineglass, raising a voice of admiration.

Drinking cool wine while bathing in the refreshing breeze of the fan after a bath in the Carpa Kingdom with its permanent sultry nights.

Normally, that was a luxury not even the nobility would ever get to experience.

No matter how used Aura was to the climate here, there was no way she wouldn’t feel discomfort from the sultry nights.

“Not good. If I do not keep a strong will, I will end up staying in the inner palace, too.”

“Gladly, is what I would like to say, but that won’t do for a Queen. Well, just drop by when you find the time. You’re always welcome here.”

Zenjirou countered Aura’s joke like that.

“Sure. If possible, I will take lunch here as well from now on, so look forward to it.”

Aura said so, not necessarily joking around, and declared to prolong her stays in the inner palace from now on.

“Okay. Then I’ll ready some ice for lunch time.”

Zenjirou assured his wife with a smile.

Even if the refrigerator was pretty big, it couldn’t supply enough ice to put in front of the fan 24/7. He had to keep some ice in stock for the right time, otherwise the important ice might be out when Aura especially came for some cooling.

The nights aside, temperatures of over thirty-seven degree centigrade could be recorded already in the noon. When the temperature surpassed the body temperature, the fan alone would no longer be cooling as it just blew hot air around.

Well, even without ice, a basin with water in front of the fan did the job, too, but it wouldn’t be such a dramatic cold breeze as with ice.

An air condition would be a highlight now.

Before long, the afterglow from the bath and the drought in her throat were soothed and Aura faced Zenjirou again with a slightly stiff expression.

“It pains me to bring this up when I told you before that you do not have to do anything, but let us begin with the lecture. We will start with the general response for royalty.”

“E- Eh!? We’re starting tonight already?”

Aura replied with a complacent smile to Zenjirou’s surprise.

“Of course. We have such wonderful illumination, so we have to make use of the night effectively.”

Saying so, she peered into his eyes as he sat next to her.

Opposite from before, Zenjirou looked up to the ceiling with a sullen face.

“Uwah, my long awaited quality time with you gets wasted with studying!”

“!?”

On his frank and forthright remark, Aura showed a bashful expression for a moment. However, before Zenjirou shifted his gaze from the ceiling back to her, she recovered her usual composed expression and answered.

“I, I am happy to hear that, but time is limited. Why, rest assured. I will not use up our bedroom time.”

“Well, can’t be helped then. If anything, I wish I could use the daytime when you‘re gone for studying… Mh? Wait a sec.”

After putting his contradictory wish into words, Zenjirou stood up from the couch as he suddenly remembered something. He headed for the corner of the room, where he kept a bunch of goods that he had brought with him from Japan.

“It should be here. It was so small that I incidentally put it onto the carpet…”

“Zenjirou?”

“Good, found it. This is it.”

Before long, Zenjirou found what he was looking for and returned to Aura on the couch with a rectangular, silver box in hand.

“Zenjirou, what is that?”

Aura asked with a slightly puzzled face, to which Zenjirou

“This is a ‘digicam‘. A digital camera to be exact. Originally it’s a device to take photos— a still image, but it can also record moving images with sound.”

answered like this and showed her the digital camera by holding it up.

However, Aura tilted her head, not knowing what was going on.

“Fodos? Still imitsch? Muwing imitsch? With saunt? What is that?”

Upon Aura’s reply, Zenjirou mused about how to explain it for a bit, but couldn’t think of anything accurate. It was unexpectedly difficult to explain a device of this level with words to someone who didn’t know anything about it.

“Well, what can I say. It can instantly make a really detailed picture and record voices and tape mobile pictures.”

“Rikort? Taip?”

But even a supposedly simplified explanation only made Aura incline her head to the side in doubt. Seemingly it was impossible to explain with words.

“Well, I’ll show you how it works. Aura, can you begin with your explanation about manners and common sense?”

After saying that to her, he directed the powered digital camera at Aura sitting on the couch.

“Muh…”

Aura looked confused by the unfamiliar device and gibberish explanation, but in the end, she stood up from the couch and started like he had told her, as she had decided to trust him.

“…I am still a bit confused, but okay. I will start with explaining the basic response.

Usually, royalty rarely confronts someone of higher status than themselves on public occasions. So I first want you to learn about dealing with people of lower or equal status.

Basically, you start with approaching the lower ranking ones. Typically, they are…”

Zenjirou kept filming Aura, who continued to explain the manners with demonstrations, with the digital camera.

He had bought the camera one year after he started working, so he was accustomed to it by now, but at the beginning, he had only filmed something a couple of times out of curiosity.

He was a bit anxious, but there was no reason to take it so serious. If he screwed up, so be it. Not like he would be bogged down when he recorded it wrongly.

Casually giving it a try, since he had nothing to lose, Zenjirou continued to tape his wife explaining the basics of etiquette with the camera.

“…That is the gist of it. For now, that should be enough. Were you listening properly, Zenjirou?”

When Aura stopped her explanation for the moment, Zenjirou too stopped the recording.

“Good, thanks, Aura. Now I just have to check if it turned out alright. Sorry, it’s hard to explain with words. Give me a second.”

Telling her so in advance, he moved to the desk with the computer, still holding the camera.

He started up the computer right away and took out the SD card from the camera, inserting it into the computer slot.

“Mhm, I am not sure what is going on, but this is a tool from your world, too?”

Aura had appeared behind Zenjirou at some point as he was tampering with the computer, and looked at the screen over his shoulder.

“Yeah, it is. Ehm, let’s see if it works before copying it to the hard-disk.”

Saying so, Zenjirou opened the video file directly from the SD card.

Several seconds after he used the mouse to click the desired file, the computer display showed a fascinating beauty with red hair and light brown skin, standing in the middle of a familiar room while speaking and gesturing with her hands.

“Oh, what a surprise! Is that me? The words are the same what I told you just now, too. How does this work? I have never seen something like this before, not even amongst the magical tools from the Twin Kingdom!”

“…..!?”

Impressed, Aura asked Zenjirou, but he was in no situation to answer.

After all, he had received an even greater shock than Aura, who saw a video for the first time in her life.

“Usualmente, la realeza rara vez se opone a alguien de estatus social superior al suyo en público. Así que primero quiero que aprendas a lidiar con gente de estatus menor o igual.

Básicamente, comienzas acercándote a los de menor rango. Típicamente, ellos son…”

“…What the?”

The words spoken by Aura on the screen only sounded like an incomprehensible, foreign language to him.

* * *

He couldn’t understand the speech from the recorded Aura.

After Zenjirou confessed this shocking truth, Aura inclined her head and asked puzzled.

“In other words, this tool can pick up the sound, but not the ‘soul of words’? In fact, I do not feel any magical power from it.”

“Huh…? ‘Soul of words’?”

Unable to comprehend it, Zenjirou gave Aura a dumb look as she naturally threw a term at him that he had never heard before, and repeated the word he had heard for the first time like a parrot.

Aura watched his expression bewildered for a while, but apparently noticed that they were talking past each other on a fundamental level.

“Wait, Zenjirou. Let us do this in order. First off, what are you so shocked about?”

On Aura’s question, Zenjirou answered in a voice that betrayed his confusion.

“Well, usually I can hear your words just fine, but I can’t understand them at all on the camera… Wait, now that I think about it, it’s weird that I could communicate with Japanese just fine, even though I’m in a different world.”

He had never questioned that fact in the slightest up till now, even though he had been living here for nearly a month already and his first summoning dated even further back.

“Okay, that is it. That is the fundamental point, where our views differ, Zenjirou. Could it be, you cannot communicate with someone that uses a different language in your world?”

What Aura said was so obvious that Zenjirou was about to reply with “Of course not”, but refrained from doing so.

“Yeah, I thought that was normal, but seeing that you ask me that means it’s different in this world?”

“Yes. Each country or race uses their own language. On our southern continent alone, we already have completely different languages for the north, south, west and east, but we do not have any trouble communicating with each other. The reason is that the ‘soul of words’ is inherent in the utterances, which a number of people perceive as the same.

In this world, this is such a common part of general knowledge that people are not even conscious of it, so I never even felt the need to explain it until now, but you seem to require an explanation.

Okay, this will take some time, so let us sit down first.”

After she said this, Aura pushed Zenjirou towards the couch in the middle of the living room to explain the most common knowledge of this world: the “soul of words”.

Back on the couch, Zenjirou simplified Aura’s lengthy explanation in his head and put it into words to confirm it with her.

“Ehm, in short, in this world, words have this so-called ‘soul of words’ and even people that use different languages can mutually understand each other without any problem?”

“Indeed. Hence it is basically impossible for “communication problems’ to occur in this world.”

Aura nodded, so Zenjirou confronted her with the next point of uncertainty right away.

“Ehm, if you have something so convenient, why even bother to learn the language? I mean, wouldn’t the meaning come across by just randomly saying ‘Ah’ or ‘Uh’?”

Zenjirou frankly spoke out his mind, but Aura shook her head to the question of her husband.

“No, it does not work like that. The soul of words is only inherent in ‘exact utterances that everyone perceives as the same’. For example, if a newborn utters ‘Ah’ with the meaning of ‘breasts’ for breastfeeding, the soul of words will not work as only the baby perceives it as such. At least a few thousand of people would need to perceive the ‘Ah’ as ‘breasts’ for it to work.”

“Oho. Wait? But what if a bad adult teaches his young child that a ‘chair’ is a ‘table’ and a ‘table’ a ‘chair’, would someone from a different linguistic area still only hear ‘chair’ even though the child means a table when saying ‘chair’?”

“Yes. The soul of words is only inherent in the ‘exact utterance with a common perception’ itself. Your own will does not affect it.”

“I see… But why couldn’t I understand the recorded words just now? They are correctly reproduced, no?”

Aura nodded and gave her own theory to Zenjirou’s valid doubt.

“I presume it is because that tool has no magical power. All of us are not conscious of it when we usually use it, but the mutual understanding from the ‘soul of words’ consumes a bit of magical power. So the ‘soul of words’ does not work for magicless utterances, even if the utterance is reproduced ‘exactly’.”

Aura’s explanation was easy to understand. Zenjirou nodded firmly while still voicing another doubt for confirmation.

“I see, I see. Then I guess there are hardly any people in this world, who speak multiple languages? You will make ends meet by remembering one of the languages and since it gets translated on its own, it must be difficult to learn a second language.”

For example, even if an American said “apple”, it would automatically sound like “ringo” to a Japanese. With a mechanism like that, it was close to impossible for a Japanese to learn English afterwards.

As Zenjirou’s conjecture was correct, Aura replied with a firm nod.

“Indeed. For that reason, only a small number of magicians know multiple languages, because a skilled magician can deliberately stop the flow of magical power. Like this:”

Saying so, Aura deliberately cut off the magical power and

“Te amo, mi querido.“

said this short sentence. Just like in the video from the camera on the computer earlier, Zenjirou only heard a foreign language.

“One has to be taught by a magician from another country that can control their magical power likes this. On the other hand, when you can control the magical power yourself and cut it off, the soul of words will no longer work either, because it requires both parties, the speaker and the listener, to be endowed with magical power to invoke it.

Also, some special places apparently radically blockade the invocation of magical power, too. So the soul of words is not working in such places either.”

If Aura was telling the truth, then either the whole Earth was one of these special places that blocked magical power or Earthlings were a race without any magical power.

Either way, Zenjirou’s ancestors, who came to Earth 150 years ago, must have surely gone through a lot of trouble. After all, two people, who didn’t know the concept of “communication problems”, were thrown into a world, where they couldn’t communicate with anyone.

It was rather wondrous that they lived in peace for so long and even left offspring behind.

“Hoo. Seems it’s pretty difficult to learn multiple languages here, but there’s no merit in it. But a few magicians go through all that trouble to learn it, right? Why do they go so far? Doesn’t seem like they would need it.”

Aura laughed a bit to Zenjirou’s plausible suspicion and answered.

“Because they rather want to learn the ‘writing’ than the words. Writings are records of the pronunciation of words. It is difficult to learn the writing when you cannot even converse in the language. Since the soul of words is not inherent in the writings, you have to learn it to read texts of other countries.”

“Ah, right. Reminds me, I don’t have seen any writings of this world yet. Hey, can you write something for me?”

Jumping at the chance, Zenjirou passed Aura a ball pen and a copy paper that were placed near the computer.

“Oh, that is some rather white and thin parchment. And this quill has a strange form as well. Where is the ink?”

“Ah, no. This isn’t made from animal skin, but from wood. And that pen is called a ball pen and you can write with it just fine when you press it down. The ink is inside of it.”

At first, Aura was a bit bewildered from her first contact with the writing implements of modern Japan, but a ball pen wasn’t as difficult to handle as a dip pen anyway. She got familiar with it in no time and said impressed.

“Ohh! Now that is convenient. You save a lot of time without dipping it into the ink and above all, it is so easy to write onto this thin paper without tearing it or getting stuck.”

“The paper aside, I bought a dozen of these ball pens, so you can have one or two if you want. I have other colours beside black, too, like red or blue.”

Aura accepted Zenjirou’s offer with a smile.

“Why, thank you. I will gladly take them.

Okay, I am done. These the thirty letters are in use here in the western part of the southern continent with our country at its center.”

Before long, Aura had written thirty different symbols that he had never seen before, onto the copy paper and showed it to Zenjirou.

“Oho, I thought as much, but it really are phonetic symbols. Seeing as there are thirty, it’s close to the English alphabet? Hey, Aura, try writing down ‘a’ ‘i’ ‘u’ ‘e’ ‘o’, ‘a’ ‘ka’ ‘sa’ ‘ta’ ‘na’.”

“Mh, what? Sorry, please repeat that.”

“Okay, I’ll go one by one. First one is ‘a’…”

Luckily enough, short syllables without a meaning weren’t affected by the “soul of words” and Aura listened to Zenjirou’s unaltered pronunciation.

While she wrote it down, he confirmed that the letters of this world roughly used the same system as the alphabet from his world.

Linguistically speaking, there was no clear distinction between vowels and consonants, but the way it made up a sound by linking up various letters was exactly the same. However, there were a lot of small differences like no distinction between R and L (there was no letter for L) and various letters for M.

But it seemed like most of the thirty letters could be directly converted to the English alphabet.

As for another obvious difference, there was no distinction between upper and lower case. It made it a bit inconvenient for small nuances, but the few letters might make it at least easier for learning it from scratch.

“Okay, since I only have to learn these thirty letters, it seems easy. Though the trick is to learn the sentence structure afterwards.

But I guess it would be more useful to learn numbers first? Aura, while we’re at it, can you write down the ‘numerals’ of this world, too?”

After adding the reading for the thirty symbols above it in Katakana, Zenjirou casually asked Aura that.

However, Aura’s reaction was far beyond his expectation.

“’Numerals’? You mean writing down numbers? I would say it takes a lot of effort to learn the numbers without preparation.”

Saying so, Aura carefully started to write on a new copy paper.

“This is 1, this 2 and this one 3. I believe it is better if you only learn up till 10 for now. Merchants and soldiers aside, even amongst normal nobility, there are few, who know to write the words for ‘a hundred million’ or ‘one billion’.”

“…..”

Zenjirou unconsciously fell silent and looked at what Aura had written. For each number, she had linked various letters into one word.

Just like writing 1 as “one”, 2 as “two” and 3 as “three” in the English alphabet.

“…Don’t tell me this world doesn’t know of ‘numerals’?”

For a moment Zenjirou feared as much, but thinking about, it wasn’t all that unbelievable.

In Japan too they calculated rather complicated with the help of Chinese numerals, sliding rules or abacuses in the past before Arabian numerals were introduced.

They also used early simultaneous equations like the Tsurukamezan or applied the Pythagorean theorem to calculate the depth of water from the length the afloat part of an aquatic plant could be pulled to the side. When looking into the documents of merchants or supply caretakers of the feudal lords during the warring state period in Japan, one would apparently find examples of unexpected detailed calculations.

Considering that, having no numerals didn’t equal having no arithmetic. To begin with, it was unthinkable that such an imposing palace was built without some kind of higher mathematics in the architecture. Actually, it would be even more amazing if they built this palace by rule of thumb instead. That would be magic for you.

However, having Arabic numerals or not obvious affected the “lower class’” ability to calculate.

To improve the ability of written calculation for an ordinary person, the concept of the decimal numbers, including the zero, was indispensable.

“Numerals? You mean special characters for the numbers? Now that is intriguing. What is the advantage of having something like that?”

Aura asked curious, whereat Zenjirou spontaneously explained the benefits of numerals with passion after having pulled himself together.

“Yeah, first off, it’s easy to learn. With the decimal numbers, you only have to remember ten characters, the zero included, and you can write any number, be it ever so big. And when you remember the four symbols +, -, ×, ÷, too, anyone can do the four basic arithmetic operations in two or three years…”

“Mm, Mm…”

At some point, Zenjirou had forgotten the restraint of “ not contributing any noticeable influence as much as possible“ he had set for himself before coming to this world and passionately explained numerals.

Chapter 05: Peaceful Passing of Time

A few days after the night, where Zenjirou learned about the “soul of words”.

The temperature in the Carpa Kingdom continued to raise day by day and entered the hottest season of the year at last.

He didn’t know the exact temperature. Ever since the day, where the maximum temperature crossed forty degree centigrade during the day already, he had turned around the thermometer, so that he could no longer read it, to keep his sanity.

To him, it felt like the temperature was even higher than forty degree now, but he didn’t have the courage to check it on the thermometer.

In the past few days, Zenjirou had closed all the window shutters in the inner palace and lived with the light of the LED lamps in the middle of the day, even though it was “unhealthy”.

Still, this melting heat wasn’t entirely bad for him.

In this season, where the permanent high temperature could kill you for working normally, the palace established a three-hour break at noon.

Thanks to that, Zenjirou recently got to spend time together with Aura in the inner palace during the day, too, not just the night.

“Fuh, this cursed heat. Compared to my office, this is heaven.”

Coming into the room with all the window shutters shut, Aura headed straight to the refrigerator first of all.

“Oh, Aura. Sounds tough.”

Zenjirou called out to Aura, who looked into the refrigerator, while playing on a portable game console and lying on the couch.

“Mm.”

Still with her back to him, Aura gave a short reply and clattering took some ice out of the icebox, then put it into the ice crusher next to the refrigerator, all in in an accustomed manner.

“Lala~”

She spun the handle of the ice crusher with a complacent smile and when the container was full of shaved ice, she took the red bottle of strawberry syrup from the refrigerator and poured it generously over the ice.

Zenjirou must have watched her out of the corner of his eyes, as he flustered called out to her in a protest.

“Hey, Aura! You’re using too much!”

However, Aura was completely unperturbed.

“Do not be stingy, not like there is any harm done.”

Saying so, she put the closed bottle with strawberry syrup back into the refrigerator, took the glass bowl with the shaved ice in one hand and came over to the couch, where Zenjirou was lying.

“No, there is! The harm obviously is that the bottle gets empty!”

While protesting, Zenjirou closed the collapsible game console and sat up his lying body on the couch, giving Aura space to sit on.

That he specially made room for her to sit on the same couch, even though there was another couch on the other side, showed how well the couple got along.

Aura scooped the shaved rice, bright red from the strawberry syrup, with a long, silver spoon and raised it to her mouth.

“Rest assured. I am having the cooks of the palace make something similar by boiling down fruits and brown sugar.”

Aura confidently responded like that, which caught Zenjirou’s interest.

“Oho, is it good?”

A boiled down substances from fruits and brown sugar. Maybe it was something like jam? If that was the case, it certainly could serve as a replacement for the syrup.

Zenjirou asked in anticipation, but Aura kept her gaze on the shaved ice and avoided a direct answer.

“…Therefore, I will take this strawberry syrup. You can have that special fruit-sugar juice the cooks make so diligent.”

“Hey, does it taste good?”

“…Ahh, my brain is freezing. I cannot get enough of this cold-rush.”

“I bet it doesn’t taste good yet…”

As she felt guilty from her husband’s reproachful eyes, the Queen confessed while averting her eyes.

“Yes… The food culture of your world is just too outstanding. It seems pretty difficult to reproduce the exact same thing.”

Zenjirou sighed to the Queen’s honest confession. He hadn’t been hoping for much anyway, but he still felt disappointed.

“Hah… Then don’t waste it. I only brought one bottle of each: strawberry, lemon and blue Hawaii.”

“Yes, leave the strawberry one to me.”

“No, strawberry’s my favourite, too. Well, whatever.”

Zenjirou shrugged his shoulders and resigned to Aura.

The trick to keep a harmonic married life as a sponger husband, who got all necessities provided by the wife, was to yield at least this much to her.

Placing his portable game console on top of the table, he stood up and then headed over to the refrigerator.

There he removed one of the many wet towels, which were cooled there, from it and tossed it at Aura, who had just finished eating her shaved ice.

“For your sweat, Aura.”

“Oh, thanks.”

Aura was in a muck sweat all over, as she had taken in fluids so rapidly, and accepted the cold towel grateful, then wiped the sweat on her face and body with it.

“…..”

“…..”

Time-wise it was the middle of the day, but at present, the room was illuminated by the LED lamps, since the window shutters were closed to keep the heat and sunlight out.

Amidst this night-like atmosphere, Zenjirou’s carnal desire naturally awoke when he saw his beloved wife wiping her body with the towel, even if she was still wearing clothes.

Noticing his obvious glances, Aura showed a bewitching smile while she turned her back on him.

“Anyway, I think I can never repay you for all the benefits I receive from the things you brought with you. And even while I told you that you would have nothing to do, I am having you study manners, common sense and magic.”

From Aura’s point of view, it was a legit claim.

Cold drinks and refreshment in the form of a combination of ice and the fan, every day. Aura had no recollection of ever having spent the hottest season of the Carpa Kingdom, which was known for its everlasting summer, in such comfort.

The closest thing would be the one summer she spent at the royal summer resort near a lake in the highlands as a child.

“It’s okay. Don’t worry about that.

I brought all this stuff because I wanted to use it myself anyway and from the beginning, I was prepared to learn its culture and customs to some extent as to settle down in a country different from my birthplace.”

On the other hand, Zenjirou’s words were genuine as well. Even if Aura had promised him that he “would have nothing to do”, he never considered it very likely that he would actually live like an indoor pet, doing nothing but eat, play and sleep all day.

Looking at the history of Earth, it was normal even for reclusive individuals like royal concubines to appear at official events. Taking that into account, Zenjirou considered it inevitable that he would have to learn manners and history of the country to some extent as not to embarrass the royal family.

Besides, business hours in this world were affected by the setting sun, so the “tasks” here were nothing compared to his salaryman days, where he considered himself “lucky” when he was able to return home before the date changed.

Aura, unable to imagine these circumstances, finished wiping her sweat and put the towel on the table, confirming with her humble husband.

“Hey, Zenjirou. Is there anything inconveniencing you?

I know that you are refusing to get in contact with others because you properly understand my standpoint. And it is a fact that you are helping me with that.

However, it pains me to continue to restrict your freedom like this and not repay you in any way.”

It had been close to a month since Zenjirou married into the royal family.

Even Aura had figured out at this point that the conduct of his husband, never causing trouble or being selfish, was a restriction he had placed on himself to cause as few problems as possible, because he perfectly comprehended the standpoints of his wife and himself.

By the way, the attendants working in the inner palace, like the waiting maids or exclusive cooks, evaluated Zenjirou extremely favourable as of now.

An effortless Master that wasn’t selfish and overbearing. As an attendant, one couldn’t wish for a better Master.

After the instruction of the waiting maids centred around the supervisory maid, Aura had automatically told them “Do not take the current situation as the norm”.

Humans could get used to anything. It was surprisingly common that attendants, used to an effortless Master, couldn’t cope with their Master’s sudden selfishness.

Aura perceived her husband from a different world as someone that was too mindful of others and had the habit to stifle his own desires.

However, even when he was told all that, Zenjirou had no particular demands.

Sure, he felt the urge to leave the inner palace soon, but considering the troubles that came along with it, it wasn’t worth to push that selfishness through and even as the Queen, Aura couldn’t do anything about his complaints regarding the food or heat.

Lastly, his “sympathetic side”. It was irritating to Aura, but since Zenjirou was brought up in the plain old fashion of the common people, his values made him perceive selfishness as something “unsightly”, nipping the discussion in the bud.

“Well, I’m good for now. I’ll be sure to tell you if I’ve any complaints.”

“Not complaints, I want you to tell me your wishes. Oh well. Anyway, you do not need to show any reservation. I want to repay you for your devotion, even for a bit.”

Aura said that with a gentle smile, which fuelled Zenjirou’s love for her, but at the same time, his prankish nature, too.

He made a side-glance at the digital clock. The time was three minutes past one o'clock in the afternoon.

During the intense heat, the midday break approximately lasted until half past three in the afternoon.

Alright. There was enough time left.

After confirming the surplus of time, Zenjirou approached Aura on the couch, called out to her jokingly and jumped at her.

"Okay, if you insist… Repay me with your body!"

Aura instantly figured out her husband's intention as he jokingly flung himself at her, and spread her arms to accept him.

She properly caught him and embraced him tightly.

"Fine. …Mm."

With her arms around her husband's back, she passionately locked lips with him.

A tight embrace and passionate kiss. If that was what her husband wanted, it was rather simple. She just had to be willing.

"….."

However, the essential reaction of her husband was different from what she had expected.

Every night, if they hugged like this, he would assertively seek her lips and trail her body with his hands, but for some reason he was like a doll, stiff and not moving.

"…What is the matter, Zenjirou?"

Aura doubtful asked like that after their kiss.

"…."

However, Zenjirou didn't answer and separated from Aura wordlessly, moving to the corner of the room and crouching down there.

"Zenjirou? Why are you poking the carpet in the corner of the room with a gloomy expression?"

First a passionate embrace, then depressed a second later. Aura couldn't follow the drastic change in her husband and called out to him bewildered.

In response, Zenjirou curled up into a ball in his corner and answered weeping while drawing circles on the ground.

"…Well, it's not like I went all out. No, really, I didn't jump with all my might. But still, my wife caught me head-on so easily, even though I tried to push her down, and what's worse, she didn't even realize what I was trying to do…"

Zenjirou didn't have a "macho" mentality that took pride in physical toughness. However, as a man, it was a slightly sad fact that his wife could stop a body blow from him.

"Ah…"

Aura looked abashed on his words.

(Oops. I knew the hug was rather enthusiastic, but he actually wanted to push me down)

As Aura had gone through real battles for years, her body was sufficiently trained as a soldier. Due to that, she could absorb a sudden attack from Zenjirou, an amateur, like it was nothing, even though he was slightly taller than her.

However, this world was more patriarchic than modern Japan and likewise, physical toughness was considered a virtue. Aura took the sorrow of a husband, who tried to push down his wife, but got caught instead, more serious than Zenjirou himself.

What should she do now? The Queen had unconsciously embarrassed her husband and mused for a while. Then,

"K- Kyaah."

At her wits' end, Aura raised an affected voice and collapsed on the couch by herself.

"Too late! I never made a special tackle with such a delayed effect!"

"…Kyaah"

Not discouraged from his retort, Aura kept lying on the couch and continued to raise an affected shriek.

"No, like I said…"

"…Kyaah."

"….."

When the shrieking Aura writhed on the couch, her skirt with the deep slit rolled up and partly exposed her light brown legs and thighs.

He was used to the sight, as he saw it every night, but it was nevertheless delicious.

"…Ei!"

"Kya!?"

In the end, Zenjirou accepted the delayed effect from the tackle and threw himself at the fallen Aura.

* * *

Approximately one hour later.

After the workout on the couch, Zenjirou and Aura, still half-naked, threw themselves into studying.

Zenjirou sat in front of his computer in a pair of fashion trunks, whereas Aura, wearing small shorts and a towel around her neck, stood at an angle behind him.

A bundle of dragonskin parchment sat next to the computer. The taxes from last year of the Carpa Kingdom were recorded on them.

The tax documents basically only consisted of "places", "names" and "values", so it was most suitable to learn the letters and pronunciation of this world, or so claimed Aura.

Zenjirou didn't take her opinion at face value, but still recorded how Aura read out the words written on the dragonskin parchments aloud while pointing at them one-by-one, with the camera every day and wrote it into a spreadsheet on the computer while checking with the video.

A few days ago, he had "programmed the foreign letters" by drawing all thirty characters of this country with the mouse as sprites and allocated a key on the keyboard to each.

It was extremely inefficient as he had to convert every single character on the input, but at least he could write the letters of this world on his computer now.

Then Zenjirou had made study materials to learn the readings of the letters by himself, by writing down the characters of this world from Aura's tax documents and adding Katakana or Arabian numerals to it.

Seeing as Aura especially prepared tax documents from last year, it was obvious she had some other intention too, but the official reason was for studying.

"So, Zenjirou, are you done with the papers?"

"Yeah, finished them yesterday. I'll print them out now."

Zenjirou sent the fruit of his labour, the spreadsheet data to the printer. He had brought this printer with him as an extra, since it would have been a waste to throw it away.

He had only three capsule of the valuable ink for each colour, but if he didn't use it, it would clog up with time anyway, rendering it useless.

Therefore he wasn't particular stingy with the printouts and printed the data from yesterday's efforts in good quality.

Aura curiously watched how the machine automatically coughed up the papers and when she confirmed that it finished before long, she took the bundle of papers in hand and looked through them.

“Okay, then let us check if your pronunciation is correct. Zenjirou, read it out aloud from the first page.”

“Okay, here I go. The first is the County of Albeniz. The tax yields are dragonskins: One-thousand, bags of wheat: two-thousand, lumber: ….”

While Aura was looking at the printouts, Zenjirou directly read from the spreadsheet on the computer display.

Aura, listening with nods and agreeable responses, pointed out any mistakes with pronunciations or numbers.

“Ah, this one does not read as ‘Viscount Bonija’, but ‘Viscount Bonilla’.”

“Okay, ‘lla’, not ‘ja’.”

The places and family names were proper names, so the “soul of words” didn’t work and he heard the correct spelling even when someone spoke it out, which might make it perfect for becoming familiar with the letters. Furthermore, Zenjirou even learned about nobles esteemed enough to appear on royal tax documents, on the side.

In that way, it wasn’t necessarily wrong to learn how to read basic letters from “tax documents”.

For example, even an unknown text could be read somewhat when you knew a hundred or two hundred vocabularies.

Either way, this world had no optimized books for beginners to learn the letters like language textbooks for elementary school students in modern Japan.

He had no choice but learn it the hard way, even if it was a bit inefficient.

When the reading lesson with the tax documents ended before long, Aura expressed a question she suddenly thought of in the end.

“Hey, Zenjirou. Why are some numbers written in ‘red’ and some in ‘blue’?”

Zenjirou answered Aura’s question with a rare profound smile.

“Yeah, the different colours make it easier to understand when the calculated value from the program varies from the value on the tax documents. The red colour indicates a small error compared to the calculation, the blue colour a big error.”

“Oho…”

Aura raised a quiet voice with an inexpressive face in response to Zenjirou’s answer.

Even if they were tax documents submitted to the royalty, there was no way all the numbers would get checked for mistakes in the palace.

After all, they were a lot of them. It would take a ridiculous amount of dragonskin parchments and personnel expenses to recalculate everything.

The usual procedure only consisted of skimming through them and recalculating a few random sheets after finding mistakes that could be spotted on a glance.

And “for some reason”, even these random checks rarely came upon influential higher nobles or nobles with good connection to the inquisitor.

However, Zenjirou could do these kind of calculations all by himself without any problems by using the calculation program. After all, he only had to make a template and correctly input the numbers there. Anyone, who had done a bit of office work for a company, could do that.

“Zenjirou, could I borrow these for a bit?”

He had perfectly anticipated her question, so he made a smile as innocent as possible and answered.

“Yeah, sure. Go easy on them, okay. Wait, I‘m in no position to say that.”

“Got it.”

The Queen replied to her husband, who scratched his head, with a grim tinted smile.

* * *

Afternoon on the same day. Aura, alone with Secretary Fabio in her office, took out the copy papers she borrowed from Zenjirou at noon.

Keeping an inexpressive face, Secretary Fabio only raised one eyebrow.

“Your Highness, what is that?”

“The tax documents of important nobles from last year. I had my husband look through them under the pretext of ‘learning letters’ to test his understanding about statecraft, but he recalculated everything in a few days and pointed out flawed numbers.”

“…Oho.”

The eyes of the secretary with the slender face got an alarmed glint on Aura’s words.

Seeing Secretary Fabio being cautious about Zenjirou as always, she said without hiding her wry smile.

“You never let your guard down against my husband, do you? He is not so ambitious that you would need to be so cautious about him.”

The secretary replied agreeing, yet obstinate to Aura.

“Yes, I fundamentally agree with you. Judging by his actions in the past month, it is quite unlikely that he has any ambitions in politics. However, I have to stress that is only unlikely at best. We cannot rule it out completely.

To begin with, the more I get to know about his intelligence and education, the more unbalanced his lack of ambition becomes. We cannot ignore the possibility that his behaviour so far is a well-performed act.”

Zenjirou was an extremely unnatural being to Fabio.

A plebeian would never concede to his own position. And a noble would never lack ambition towards power and status.

Could there be such a convenient “man” in this world, who more or less comprehended how his position as the Prince Consort affected others and thus behaved discrete and considerate as not to bring any harm to the Queen’s political power?

Well, the different world might actually have such a person, since it was kind of obvious that the common sense of this world didn’t apply to someone from a different world.

However, since it couldn’t be ruled out that Zenjirou was just pretending to be harmless and cooperative while actually sharpening his fangs, it was necessary that at least one person stayed cautious of him.

“I presume it is for the better that you are not vigilant, Your Highness. It is an extremely difficult task to keep one’s innermost thoughts hidden from the person you share meals and bed with. Instead, I will keep an eye on Zenjirou-sama’s actions.”

“Fine. Sorry to trouble you, Fabio.”

“Yes, it has been nothing but trouble ever since I became your secretary.”

The middle-aged secretary completely agreed to the Queen’s favourable words.

“…Normally you would respond with ‘No, not at all’ or ‘This is nothing in the services for my Queen’ in such a situation, would you not?”

Aura indicated a wry smile, whereat Fabio, still inexpressive, shrugged his shoulders a bit

“I see my job as speaking the outright truth.”

and boldly said so.

In fact, his home truths statements had helped her numerous times so far, so Aura had nothing to retort.

She sighed, then got back on topic.

“Anyway, I had a look at the ‘numerals’ from my husband’s world in the last few days, and I have to say, they are quite convenient. I believe it would be rather beneficial if we implement them in some kind of way.”

At the same time Zenjirou learned the letters of this world, Aura learned how to read and use Arabic numerals from him, too.

Needless to say, Aura mastered the Arabic numerals in no time as she only had to learn ten numbers from 0 to 9 in contrast to Zenjirou, who had to remember all letters and vocabularies.

Calculating with the Arabic numerals was still out of question, but she already understood the values from reading the written numbers.

The convenience of Arabic numerals was very clear from looking at the tax documents she had borrowed from Zenjirou.

To draw an analogy, it was as convenient as telling the same number apart when once written in English and once in Arabic numerals.

“2932” was a short number when written in Arabic numerals, but became extremely long when writing it as “two thousand nine hundred and thirty-two” with the Latin alphabet.

The tax documents had hundreds of such numbers. Even if it only saved a little bit of time for writing or reading it individually, it became a huge saving for bundles of hundreds or thousands.

Introducing the reading and writing of them would improve business to no end and it was possible that the uneducated masses would turn into a class that “cannot read letters, but at least numbers”, like Zenjirou had said before.

That said, it was uncertain whether the birth of a common class that could calculate with numbers was advantageous or disadvantageous to the country or royal family.

Secretary Fabio became a bit absorbed in thought on Aura’s positive opinion, then answered.

“Indeed. I agree that numerals are beneficial, but I object to suddenly implement them all around. It will bring along great confusion at the workplaces and no matter how easy it is to remember them, learning something unknown from scratch is never an easy task.

If you force them to learn it, it will definitely bring about opposition, though I do not know how much.”

“Mh, I see. You are right…”

Fabio’s realistic insight made Aura be lost in thought for a while with her hand on her chin.

“Okay, then we will distribute a reading table for the numerals to the workstations that deal with calculations first, add the numerals to the existing written-out numbers on all royal documents from now on and see how it goes for while. What do you say?”

“That would require to obligate at least the civil servants in the palace to learn the numerals, though.”

Fabio articulated a solely objective doubt to Aura’s suggestion.

“Is that a no?”

Asked back, Secretary Fabio fell silent for a while, then shook his head.

“No, that much should be okay. I will prepare for it at once.”

“Yes, please do.”

Aura nodded satisfied.

It was regretful that it couldn’t be implemented all over, but dynamic reforms like this one often ended up in a failure when rushing it. In the worst case, they might be better off to rely on “the next generation to use numerals” by adding the Arabic numerals to the training menu of the newcomers.

For the meantime, it was better not to expect any visible improvements from implementing the numerals.

The calculations Zenjirou did with the numerals for these “tax documents” were far more suitable for an immediate benefit than the numerals itself.

“Marquis Bervides, Baron Colunga, Feudal Knight Daviino and Feudal Knight Gamez. The discrepancy in their tax documents is especially intolerable.”

While reading out the names, Aura licked over her lips with her red tongue.

As to rebuke the Queen, who showed a smile like a predator, Secretary Fabio declared with a calm voice.

“Your Highness, even if the numbers are incorrect, it is a precedent we have overlooked so far. It could trigger an outburst when you suddenly put pressure on them.”

“I know. I am not so foolish as to use drastic measures like finding them guilty. We will merely use it to show them who is in control and get them to compromise.”

Saying so, Aura wrinkled her nose a bit irritated.

The interesting part about humans was that they misapprehended their wrong acts as legitimate when it was left unpunished for years, even though illegal acts were statutory.

When you suddenly tried to punish a person with such a perception according to the laws one day, he would fly into a passion with “You never did anything before, why now!”.

That was an emotional point of view, but if there were several of them, even the Queen would find herself in the line of a harsh retaliation when she neglected to show sympathy. The power of the Queen and royal family in the Carpa Kingdom was overwhelming, but not so overwhelming that they could ignore the influence of conspiring nobles.

“And if I may add, all of these people you mentioned, contributed greatly to the previous war.”

“…Right. We cannot deny the fact that their services in the war were part of the reason that our country emerged victorious.”

Aura nodded, honestly acknowledging what Secretary Fabio had added.

At present, most of the remaining nobles were survivors of the previous great war. Barely anyone of them was so incompetent as to falsify taxes to the Kingdom or pocket heavy taxes from the people in their fief simply for their own good.

Most of these incompetent nobles, who only leeched off the Kingdom, couldn’t protect their family during the war and perished.

That was the reason why the remaining nobles were so troublesome.

The nobles mentioned by Aura earlier used the evaded taxes on their private military preparations. This very military power had shouldered a part of the defence for the country in the previous war, so it technically couldn’t be denied that these unpaid taxes were used for the good of the Kingdom in a roundabout manner.

However, it was likewise a fact that these taxes could replenish the royal army better if they were collected properly.

The royal family stipulated the reinforcement of the royal army through taxes to optimize the troops and the local feudal lords couldn’t drop the effort to strengthen their own troops as the royal army was useless for defending the own territory due to their inflexibility.

Both weren’t mistaken in their approaches, so it was rather natural that discord emerged between the royal family and feudal lords.

It was clearer than crystal clear that the inner power balance would be disturbed sooner or later when the uncovered tax evasion would be tolerated and the feudal lords strengthened their military power even further.

In the worst case, the feudal lords could band together to revolt against the royal family, so a balance of power, where the royal army could easily suppress such an attempt, should be preserved.

At present, there was no one so disillusioned amongst the important feudal lords to pointlessly go against the royal family,

but there was no guarantee that all successors in the next or after next generation were just as capable and quick-witted.

“Still, illegal remains illegal. I will be temperate and careful not to hurt their honour and prestige, but I will have them pay a suitable compensation.”

Aura declared flatly, whereat Fabio mused for a while.

“…Then how about we notify them informally about the discovery of inconsistencies in the documents so far and ask them ‘to cooperate of their own initiative‘, so something like that never happens again?”

Before long, the secretary settled his thoughts and suggested a compromise plan.

“Well, that sounds reasonable. Okay, I leave the details to you.”

“Yes, certainly.”

The matter was settled, so Aura suddenly broached a different subject.

“Come to think of it, how goes the tutor search for my husband? I would assume they are assembled for the most part?”

Secretary Fabio wasn’t flustered by Aura’s sudden question and replied affirmative.

“Yes. Three self-applications and thirty-one recommendations. The greater majority are young, unmarried women with high magical power.”

Unmarried women in a marriageable age with high magical power. Aura made a sarcastic laughter to these obvious candidates for a concubine.

“God forbid! They are just incompetent if they recommended them without realizing my intention, but it is a bit troublesome if they did so while clearly knowing what I wanted. Am I being underestimated that much?”

Sending in a candidate for the concubine of the Prince Consort while ignoring the Queen’s real intentions. Even if it was done in the cause of preserving the lineage, it equalled picking a fight with their Master.

“Rather than underestimating you, I would say the appeal of sending in a pawn as Zenjirou-sama‘s concubine, got the better of them despite the danger.”

Aura screwed up her nose displeased.

“Hmpf, I do not think that my husband is so careless as to be manipulated by the wirepuller behind a concubine.”

“I agree, but we can say that because we know his actual condition.”

“Well, yeah. In that case, I guess we will have to ask beldam Pascuala to be my husband’s tutor after all.”

Saying so, Aura stretched herself on her chair as to relax her stiff body.

In response, Secretary Fabio opened his mouth, hesitant on a rare occasion.

“Well, regarding that matter, there is one candidate that we cannot afford to ignore. Count Márguez recommended his own wife, Lady Octavia.

As you know, they call Lady Octavia the model of a noble woman. Knowledge, education or magic skills, there is nothing to criticize about her.

Moreover, she is already married, so she meets your requirements for the time being, Your Highness.”

“Th- That old geezer…”

Hearing an unexpected name, Aura squeezed out her words from the back of her throat.

An already married woman excelling in knowledge, education and magic. Just listening to the recited characteristics, she indeed fulfilled all of Aura’s conditions.

But then, that only applied if the other facts about her were ignored. Even if she was the wife of Count Márguez, she was only his second wife. Currently in her earlier 20s, she was young, beautiful, well-behaved and compliant, so she had been called “the celebrated flower of the royal court” until a few years ago.

Incidentally, the son of Count Márguez, Raffaello Márguez was a former candidate for being Aura’s husband and one year older than his stepmother Octavia.

“That damn geezer would not dare to instigate his own wife to adultery, would he!?”

Secretary Fabio shook his head to Aura’s speculation.

“No. Judging by his character, I doubt he would take it that far, though that is just my personal opinion.

As you may know, Lady Octavia is the “perfect noblewoman” by our country’s common sense. She is a woman proficient at natural compliance, tickling a man’s self-esteem and giving him a dynamic confidence.

Maybe he wants to draw out Zenjirou-sama's assertiveness by having him be in direct contact with such a woman for some time, and thus damage your relationship with him."

Most men would get ahead of themselves when a conservative beauty praised, flattered and gave them respectful glances. They would feel like they could do anything if they tried. And if she could incite Zenjirou's mentality into pursuing politics, Count Márguez would have a convenient direct line to royal authority in Zenjirou.

To say it with a bit more blatant words, Secretary Fabio guessed that his aim was to "pull Zenjirou from under the Queen".

If his guess was correct, the problem was that Lady Octavia herself, in the middle of events, had no ill intentions even when the wirepuller Count Márguez was full of them.

If everything Aura had heard about Lady Octavia's character so far was accurate, then she was a person, who would simply pour all her energy in her job as a "private tutor" without any ill intentions.

On the surface, she was the perfect candidate for Zenjirou's tutor.

"What will you do, Your Highness? We could always come up with some kind of reason and decline her."

Even while Aura felt a bit annoyed over the blunt glance Secretary Fabio gave her as to probe her for her intentions, she shook her head and answered.

"No, it is not worth to get on the Count's bad side for this. My husband will have to appear in public to some degree anyway.

I cannot reject everything. Count Márguez's schemes aside, there is no problem with Lady Octavia. In fact, it is a very beneficial choice for my husband. Hire her."

"Yes, Your Highness. I will get everything prepared then."

On Aura's order, Secretary Fabio answered with a courteous bow.

* * *

One day, the inner palace was kind of restless.

Today, an outsider would step into this secluded space for the first time as it had been exclusive to Zenjirou, Queen Aura and the waiting maids working in the inner palace, so far.

Zenjirou was slumped into the couch in one room of the inner palace and took a deep breath for the nth time.

(A private tutor, huh. I never thought I would have to study again at this age. Well, I had to do some studying for the company, too, though)

Thanks to his experience of going to see various business partners during his company days, Zenjirou wasn't particular uncomfortable with meeting someone for the first time, but this time, he would be the "superior" for the first time.

He wasn't all that keen about showing an outsider all the electrical appliances he bought with him, so he was waiting in an average room of the inner palace right now.

Without the grace of the ice fan, Zenjirou was sweating profoundly from the high room temperature and replenished his water balance by drinking water mixed with adequate amounts of brown sugar and salt for a while now.

(I can't use respective speech and I've to wait to introduce myself until she has done so first. Lastly, I'm strictly forbidden to do anything that might come across as extremely rude. Man, this will be difficult, seriously)

Zenjirou recalled the basic conduct Aura had taught him in his head. At that very moment.

"Excuse me. I have brought Octavia-sama. May she enter?"

"Mm, come in."

When the waiting maid's voice resounded from beyond the door, Zenjirou cleared his throat once, then replied in a demanding tone that he usually didn't use.

He was about to go to meet them at the door as a habit from his salaryman days, but realized his mistake as he stood up from the couch, and waited in that standing position.

In the next moment, the door opened with a clatter and a single Lady entered the room.

“It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance, Zenjirou-sama.

I am the wife of Count Manuel Márguez of the County of Márguez in the Carpa Kindgom: Octavia. I am greatly honoured to undertake the important duty as your tutor on this occasion.

I might be ignorant and lacking expertise, but I will do everything in my might.”

The Lady spoke in a soft voice pleasant to the ears, then bowed deeply.

(Oho, ignorant and lacking expertise, huh. So “modesty” is a virtue in this country, too)

Zenjirou ordered with a voice as dignified as possible while remembering that he once read something about “modesty” not holding true in some areas even on Earth, depending on the country.

“Lift your face.”

“Yes.”

The Lady— Octavia raised her head with the same fluid movement she had used to lower it.

(I see. She’s the so-called “Model of a Lady” in this country. Yeah, she definitely deserves the title)

Gorgeous, trim, virtuous. These words naturally popped up in his head as he looked at Octavia’s face.

She wasn’t all that tall. From Zenjirou’s point of view, her height was “average”, so approximately one-hundred and sixty centimetre.

However, she had narrow sloping shoulders, so her stature looked slender and shorter than it actually was.

Straight black hair that radiated beautifully. Jet black eyes you rarely even saw in a Japanese. And light brown skin that was pale for someone of a southern country and closer to a yellowish white, standing in contrast to the colour of her eyes and hair.

She had a prominent nose and her face as a whole was shallow, so she would easily pass as a “tanned Japanese”.

That said, even if you wanted to see a beauty of her level in modern Japan, you wouldn’t find one unless you went to a model or celebrity agency.

“I’m Zenjirou, Queen Aura’s husband. I don’t know how long our acquaintance will last, but I want us to be on good terms.”

“Yes, you honour me with your words.”

When Zenjirou recited the words he had desperately thought up in his head, Octavia lowered her head creditable.

He couldn’t afford to screw up in the conversation with her, so it exhausted him mentally, even more than he had expected.

“Well then, let’s hear about your guideline, Lady Márguez. Take a seat.”

The mental fatigue must have rushed him unconsciously. Zenjirou skipped the plans he had made in his head yesterday and offered Octavia a seat.

“? Yes, pardon me.”

Octavia showed a momentary surprise to his offer, but remembered what she was here for right away and obediently sat down on the couch.

After Zenjirou made sure that Octavia had seated herself, he slowly lowered his bottom onto the couch, too.

Sitting across Octavia on the couch with a table in-between them, Zenjirou listened to her explanation about her plan and methods to study manners, common sense and magic, from start to end.

“In short, you will principally teach me about history and magic, correcting any mistakes in manners or common sense I show during that. Is that correct?”

Zenjirou put the summary of the contents he had made in his head into words, whereupon Octavia replied with a soft smile.

“Yes. Manners and common sense are hardly something that can be taught verbally. You already seem to have an understanding about a general conduct, so I believe this way will prove to be more efficient.”

“And you will have lunch together with me from now on?”

“Yes. Manners and common sense apply the most at the dining table. I concluded it would be the best opportunity to teach about these two.”

Indeed. She had a point there. No matter how much you heard about manners, you wouldn’t adopt them that way.

You improved and refined them by trying, failing and getting advice. It would take some time, but it might be the best available option.

However, it was a bit annoying, considering that a teacher would watch his manners and common sense during meals every day from now on.

At least it would be no longer the enjoyable and lively time that it had been with Aura in the recent days.

That said, Zenjirou wasn’t so arrogant that he would reject an efficient study chance for such a selfish reason.

“Okay. If you say that’s the best way, I’ve no objections. Let’s do it that way.”

Octavia smiled softly to Zenjirou’s words and lowered her head.

“Thank you very much. Then let me get straight to the point already. Earlier when I entered the room, you greeted me after standing up from the couch, correct?”

“Ah!?”

Zenjirou unconsciously leaked a natural voice when she pointed out a mistake at once.

Octavia was very careful not to sound reproachful and continued.

“I am terrible honoured that you would receive me so politely, but for a man of your position, such an act is rather liable to be taken in as an ‘underestimate‘. In general, Her Highness Aura is the only person in the country you would have to greet standing.

Even in a foreign country, you only need to give such a polite greeting to the King himself or the immediate successor to the throne.

Likewise, you offered me a seat while remaining standing yourself, but this is a wasted kindness as well. Manners and common sense change according to the other party and situation, so it is malapropos to predefine anything, but it is expected that royalty show a bit more comfortable response.”

“…Okay. I’ll be careful of that from now on.”

Zenjirou nodded to keep up appearances, but mentally he felt like burying his head into his hands and plunking himself down right there.

(Oh damn… I thought I was being careful, but my salaryman soul kicked in again)

As a salaryman it was common sense to only seat oneself once the visiting business partner had sat down. It seemed it was more difficult than expected to correct an internalized habit.

Octavia smiled comforting as she saw through his internal struggle and broached the next subject with a composed voice.

“Then allow me to begin with explaining the basis of magic for today. If there is anything unclear or not understandable, please speak up and I will answer you to the best of my knowledge.”

“Yes, please do.”

“…Zenjirou-sama, that ‘please’.”

“R- Right. Ehm… You are allowed to begin your explanation.”

Screwing up right away, Zenjirou cleared his throat to smooth it over and rephrased his sentence.

This time it seemed to be correct as Octavia nodded curt, then started her thorough explanation with a mellifluous voice.

“I will begin my explanation about the basis of magic now. We can classify magic into two groups. The first group is the ’Four- Element Magic’ that can be more or less used by everyone. The other group is the ’Bloodline Magic’ that only people with a unique lineage can use.”

“Does four elements refer to Earth, Water, Fire, Air and the bloodline to ‘Space-Time Magic’?”

Octavia didn’t seem to be offended by Zenjirou’s interjection and replied with a nod and a smile.

“Yes, that is correct. Just, when you put aside the point that the ‘Bloodline Magic’ cannot used by anyone except a person with the special lineage, it is no different from the Four-Element Magic in its foundation.

There are three conditions necessary to activate magic: the ‘correct intonation’, the ‘correct perception’ and the ‘correct amount of magical power’.”

“Intonation, perception and amount of magical power?”

Given that, it sounded like the magic often found in games or books, but he didn’t understand anything concrete.

The beautiful private tutor could tell from Zenjirou’s expression that he didn’t understand a thing and started to explain with the aid of a concrete example.

“First of all, magic has an exclusive language. We simply call it ’Magic Language’ and the magic will not activate unless you use it. Please watch me.”

Saying so, Octavia put up the index finger of her right hand. And then,

‘O invisible water scattered in the air, gather at my finger and form a sphere. As compensation, I will make eighteen offerings of magical power to the water spirit.’

In the next moment after Zenjirou heard that, a transparent water sphere floated above Octavia’s fingertip.

“!?”

Zenjirou had no time to be surprised at that phenomena as he was speechless about something else.

(What was that just now? Octavia-san only opened her mouth for a brief moment, but I heard a ridiculous long sentence!?)

He could swear that Octavia hadn’t opened her mouth long enough just now for saying a sentence that long.

Zenjirou had no clue what was going on, whereupon Octavia put the water ball she had created at her finger tip just now, into her empty tea cup and deeply bowed to him.

“My deepest apologies, Zenjirou-sama. I have been thoughtless. The Magic Language is an incredible difficult language as the slightest variation in volume, accent or hyphenation can change its meaning, but in exchange, it is possible to pack a lot of meanings into a short sound.

Due to that, a person, who hears the Magic Language for the first time, gets overwhelmed by the vast amount of information in the short sound. Let me apologize again for forgetting about that. Please forgive me.”

Saying so, Octavia bowed down so deeply that he could see the white nape of her neck.

Zenjirou shook his head a bit and replied.

“If that’s true, it would’ve happened anyway. You might be at fault for not explaining it first, but you apologized, so everything’s fine.

Continue with the explanation.”

Zenjirou accepted her apology, whereas Octavia replied grateful.

“Thank you such much for your tolerance. I will be extra careful from now on that something like this will not happen again.”

“Good.”

Zenjirou was bewildered about her exaggeration, but managed to reply collected without showing his bewilderment.

Sure, Octavia had been careless, but he felt a bit sorry for her.

To begin with, hardly anyone in this world felt something amiss with the discrepancy between the heard information and the spoken sound as the existence of spirits was a common thing. Not to mention that even less people felt shocked about it as if they had received a blow to the head. Going by that, both, Octavia and Zenjirou, had just been unlucky.

“Then I will continue now. Just now, I chanted with the ’correct intonation’ and ’correct perception’, offering the ’correct amount of magical power’. As a result, the magic to ’create a water sphere’ activated. Next I will show you what happens when I purposefully falsify these three.”

After Octavia said that, she put up the index finger of her right hand again and chanted the spell.

‘Urmugeo’

The short chant was completely incomprehensible to Zenjirou’s ears. However, the magic didn’t activate.

“Just now, I mistook the intonation for a bit on purpose. The meaning becomes distorted from just that and the spell does not activate. Next I will chant the spell with the correct intonation, but with a mistaken perception.”

Saying so, Octavia opened her mouth for a brief moment and uttered a short sound just like before.

‘O invisible water scattered in the air, gather at my finger and form a sphere. As compensation, I will make eighteen offerings of magical power to the water spirit.’

This time, Zenjirou heard the same long sentence like on the first successful try, but no water sphere appeared at Octavia’s finger.

“Just now, I imagined the activation of a different spell while chanting the correct spell. The result is as you can see. Then lastly, I will use the correct intonation and perception, but input the wrong amount of magical power on purpose.”

‘O invisible water scattered in the air, gather at my finger and form a sphere. As compensation, I will make eighteen offerings of magical power to the water spirit.’

The fourth “water sphere” spell of today was accurately heard by Zenjirou. However, there was no outcome as expected.

Octavia smiled a bit at Zenjirou, who looked at her, and explained.

“This time, I made ‘twenty’ offers of magical power even while saying that I am offering ‘eighteen’. As a result, the activation of the spell failed.”

Zenjirou listened to her words, more or less convinced, but then raised a surprised voice.

“Wait a sec, too much is no good either?”

Zenjirou forgot his affected tone on the spur of the moment, whereat Octavia nodded and responded to his question.

“Yes. The magic will neither activate with too less nor with too much offerings. Large magic that consumes a lot of magical power will ignore a small difference, but small magic is strict about its amount of magical power.

Due to that, most magicians with a great magical power have difficulties with small magic like the one I chanted just now. of course there are exceptions, like the archmage Espaldion-sama.”

It was understandable with that explanation.

One did not even need to spare a thought about whether it was easier to fill a glass to the brim by pouring water from a 100ml bottle or from a 10l bottle.

Even while comprehending Octavia's words with the rational part of his brain, Zenjirou was kind of in a daze and took no notice of her explanation.

He was pretty excited and thrilled about the fact that he would be able to use magic himself at some point.

However, he might not get many chances to use magic properly as he rarely ever left the inner palace and wasn't suited to small magic due to his great magical power.

"Does that mean you're not suited for learning typical magic when you've great magical power?"

"Yes. In fact, I have heard that Her Highness Aura can only use a large-scale annihilation fire magic besides the Space-Time magic.

But then, a large magic like that consumes not only a lot of magical power, it also has an extremely long chant, so it is not unusually that it takes months for one to be able to recite the intonation correctly."

The more he heard, the farther away moved the day he would be able to use magic.

"Then I'll be frank: How long will it take for me to activate magic when I start learning from today on?"

At some point, he had forgotten the main point, his study about manners and common sense, and asked Octavia that.

Octavia keenly guessed what Zenjirou was after, but as his teacher, she couldn't bring herself to lie, so she shrunk her slender body, ducked her head and answered honestly.

"Well… First you need to become aware of your own magical power, then learn to control it at will, so that you can accurately pour the magical power into the magic. Normally, it takes two years to become aware of one's own magical power and another year of practice to control it at will."

"…Three years."

Zenjirou uttered with a groan, whereat Octavia quickly tried to patch up things.

"Ah, but the rest is relatively simple once you have control over that, because you only have to learn the correct intonation, draw a vivid picture of it in your head and accurately pour magical power into it. You can learn a simple spell within a day."

As she remembered that she had just told him that he was not suited for such simple spells, her words had lost their vigour in the middle of her sentence and she looked apologetic at Zenjirou with upturned eyes.

That look cooled down Zenjirou's head.

On a second thought, there was no need for him to learn magic. It was merely "better to know it" as an etiquette for a royalty with great magical power, so there was no problem when the study lasted for three to five years.

(Either way, it doesn't seem like magic will be useful for my life, even when I learn it)

At this point, Zenjirou was not informed about the potential of the unique "Space-Time Magic" in his blood, so he easily discarded it like that.

"Okay. Then let's take it slowly. Teach me well, Octavia."

"As you command, Zenjirou-sama."

The beautiful female tutor answered the Prince Consort, who recovered himself in no time, faithful with a soft smile.

* * *

Evening of the day, where he met Octavia as his private tutor and finished his first lesson without problems.

Relieved of the hours-long stress, Zenjirou spent some quality time with his wife Aura in their room of the inner palace.

He had a can of low-malt beer after his bath like always while Aura on the other hand held a glass with brandy in front of her face and enjoyed its ripe aroma.

After drinking off the bottle of white wine over the past few days, she had chosen the boxed brandy next. Apparently distilled liquor wasn't common in this world and she had chocked on its high alcoholic content at first, but after she got used to it, she enjoyed it more than the wine.

She drunk it without anything extra as Zenjirou taught her from his faint memory that "it was proper practice to drink brandy straight and unchilled".

That said, the "unchilled as proper practice" certainly didn't take the heat in the Carpa Kingdom into consideration, so she preferred drinking it chilled from the refrigerator.

Aura poured the contents of the glass down her throat bit by bit while appreciating the amber-coloured fluid that was sparkling from the light of the LED lamps through the glass, with her eyes.

"Hey, does it taste good?"

Aura nodded satisfied to Zenjirou's question and answered.

"Yes. It has a surprisingly rich aroma and strong flavour. It is quite addicting once you are used to it."

"Oho, is that so?"

To be honest, he couldn't even tell brandy and whiskey apart, so he couldn't acknowledge her evaluation. But the brandy Aura was drinking right now was called Hennessy XO or something like that, with a price of over ten-thousand yen per bottle. Fanciers knew their thing after all.

As ignorant as he was to such things, Zenjirou was satisfied with cold low-malt beer.

Aura put the brandy glass back on the table after she drunk it up and called out to her husband that sat next to her.

"So, how did it go? Tell me your impression."

Zenjirou was a bit surprised on Aura's sudden question, but he lowered his beer can and replied honestly.

"Yeah, let's see, to summarize it: It was 'more tiring than I expected'. My lack of manners was pointed out numerous times. Especially during lunch. I barely remember what I ate."

"Sorry for the troubles."

"Don't sweat it. It's necessary, right? Besides, the magic lessons are fun. Well, it certainly depressed me that it'll take me three years until I can use magic, though."

Saying so, Zenjirou shook his free hand fluttering in front of Aura.

It was a matter of fact that he had been pretty excited over seeing magic with his own eyes.

That distinguish magic had brought him from his world into this world, too, but since he was involved in it, he regretfully didn't get to see the magic activate. By comparison, the magic of a water ball floating around one's finger that Octavia had shown him earlier was way easier to comprehend.

It was far more motivating as he witnessed it himself.

"Well, there are no shortcuts to magic after all. You can only work hard at it if you want to learn it. Or to put it differently, anyone can learn it with enough time. As long as you do not give up midway, the effort will be by no means in vain."

Aura said that, then took the arm of her husband and pressed it into her deep cleavage as to encourage him.

"Aura…"

Then the Queen surprised her husband, who narrowed his eyes to slits from the soft sensation, by whispering into his ear with a mischievous smile.

"So, how was Octavia-dono? I guess you find her charming, too?"

His wife uttered the name of another woman. Zenjirou had done nothing to feel guilty about, yet he flinched out of reflex, maybe out of a habit as a man.

"Mh? What is the matter?"

Keeping a firm hold on his arm as to not let him escape, Aura pressed him on, whereat Zenjirou answered while letting his gaze drift towards the ceiling.

“Aw, yeah. She’s certainly beautiful and very friendly. Yep, I can see why her type is so popular in this country.”

“…Oho.”

He got the feeling that Aura’s voice as she gave a short reply, was somewhat lower than usual.

“You mean, she looked desirable to you as well?”

It wasn’t like Aura lacked self-confidence, but she was aware that Octavia was the exact opposite of her, so she unconsciously ended up with a probing tone.

Zenjirou wasn’t so dense that he wouldn’t notice that the mood of his wife took a turn for the worse.

“Well, she’s certainly in my strike zone, but more like a borderline pitch. I would have trouble hitting even a ‘strong fastball right in the center’, if I were to carelessly take a swing.”

However, his promptly couched excuse was completely incomprehensible to someone of this world.

For someone, who had no clue about “baseball”, the terms strike zone, borderline pitch or strong fastball right in the center were all geek-speak.

Even so, Aura must have understood Zenjirou from his tone and overall nuance.

She showed a complacent smile, then asked him again in an desire for more straightforward words.

“So, what do you mean to say? Be more precise.”

Even if she told him to be more explicit, Zenjirou’s honest thoughts were: “As if I could”.

He wasn’t the type of person that could overcome his shame to say something like “You’re the only one I love” or “You’re far more pretty” now.

“Mh? Come on, say it. For me.”

His wife playfully tucked on his arm, but Zenjirou didn’t look at her and kept his eyes on the ceiling, then gave his best answer as a compromise between his shame and his wife’s demand.

“Ehm, well… I mean, if it had been Octavia-san, who summoned me here on the first day, instead of you, then I wouldn’t be here now.”

While saying so, he felt his own face turning red.

Would Aura be satisfied with that answer? At least he hoped so. If she were to demand even “straighter” words… he would die from the embarrassment.

Zenjirou kept facing the ceiling and glanced to the side to take a peek at his wife’s reaction.

Aura’s red hair fluttered in the corner of his vision.

“Fuh… Fufufuh. I see, I see.”

Aura laughed amused.

Apparently his answer was good enough to sway her heart.

“I, too, could not be happier that you were the one being summoned.”

The Queen declared that, then Zenjirou felt her hot and wet lips pressing down on his cheek.

* * *

In the middle of the night. Aura slept intimately with her husband Zenjirou in the same bed as always. When she woke up past midnight, she carefully got off the bed as not to wake the soundly sleeping Zenjirou.

Their bedroom had LED floor lamps, but there was no way she could turn them on while Zenjirou was still sleeping.

Amidst the pitch darkness, she looked for her clothes by fumbling around. Before long, her hands touched a soft, thin cloth.

Aura picked up the smooth and thin clothing— the red and transparent negligee and stifled a giggle.

Before going to bed, she had put on this suggestive nightgown for him in appreciation for the pleasant answer of her husband to her probing question. At that time, Zenjirou had been so overjoyed that he wanted to preserve it with his "digicam" or whatever it was called.

"Ueh!?"

When her husband had raised an empty shriek like that and froze on the spot, Aura hadn't been able to suppress her laughter.

Zenjirou hadn't been so naïve to think that Aura hadn't found out about this "sexy nightgown" (all his belongings were checked on the day of his transfer), but it had been quite an effective surprise that Aura had put it on by her own accord.

As a result, it had become a rather queer situation, where a bright red Zenjirou fought against his shame even though it was Aura, who wore an embarrassing outfit.

Even so, he had been stimulated more than enough by seeing his wife in the bewitching negligee.

Their copulation that night had been fiercer and longer than usual.

"….."

Remembering their night together, Aura blushed while putting the transparent negligee aside and looking for the one-piece loungewear she had worn before.

After a short while, she found what she was looking for and slowly headed for the door, still naked and the loungewear in hand.

As not to wake up Zenjirou, she slowly took one careful step after another.

Then she successfully left the room without rousing her husband.

Now in the living room, Aura turned on only one LED lamp and quickly got dressed under its light.

Aura, wearing a blue one-piece without sleeves, sat down on the leather couch and rang the bell on the table.

Thereupon, a single waiting maid entered the room after a while. She must have walked down the dark hallway by relying on the light of the candleholder in her hand. She narrowed her eyes a bit to slits towards the bright LED lamp as her eyes had been used to the darkness.

The waiting maid had impressive long, blonde hair, which was rare for people in the Carpa Kingdom, and had originally been Aura's Abigail, but was now working directly for Zenjirou.

"You called, Your Highness."

The waiting maid made a respectful bow. Aura glanced at her, crossed her legs on the couch and said.

"Give me your report."

The faithful attendant started to speak about what she had seen today, careful not to be subjective, upon her Master's order.

"Very well. As far as I could tell, Octavia-sama showed no suspicious behaviour. She undertook her duty as Zenjirou-sama's private tutor faithful."

The waiting maid had treaded upon the study session between Zenjirou and Octavia during the noon numerous times to bring them refreshments and towels and reported that with a firm tone.

"Good. I guess she is just scouting out things after all?"

After hearing the report, Aura mumbled that to herself.

To begin with, Octavia was an honest person unsuited to scheming. Count Márguez, too, might only want to know about the relevant nature of the "Queen's husband" through the eyes of his wife.

She couldn't let down her guard just yet, but it seemed like she didn't have to be so sensitive about it from now.

"Okay. From now on, only report if there is anything suspicious about Octavia-dono."

"As you command."

The waiting maid lowered her head, whereat Aura nodded with "Good" and continued.

"Now then, how does my husband spend his days lately? Did he get close to any other woman?"

Aura had asked this question the waiting maids numerous times already.

Amongst the past Kings, there were actually very few, who didn't lay hands on the waiting maids of the inner palace. Not to mention, Zenjirou lived in the inner palace instead of going back and forth from it like the past Kings.

Actually it was more unnatural not to ogle the young and beautiful waiting maids.

However, even this time, the maid shook her head a bit troubled and gave the same reply as the ones before.

"No. Let alone touching anyone, Zenjirou-sama rarely ever looks at the women with such eyes.

In the first place, Zenjirou-sama tends to be against us entering the room.

Therefore we do not enter the room unless we have business to take care of. On the other hand, Zenjirou-sama always moves into a different room when we come for cleaning."

Leaving the room, because the waiting maids clean it. That was something unbelievable, considering their Master-Attendant relationship, but he probably couldn't escape his Japanese manners again there.

In a way, it was like a husband being chased out by the vacuum cleaner of the wife.

Aura nodded to the report of the waiting maid and gave her instructions.

"I see. I am repeating myself, but my husband is not good at expressing himself like wanting this or wanting that. He perceives it as a 'negative virtue' to express such desires. I know it may be difficult to serve him, but have regards for his feelings and try your best to meet his demands."

"Very well. As you command."

"Okay, you can go. Thanks."

"Very well. Excuse me."

With her report done, the waiting maid bowed once and left the room.

After the maid closed the door behind her, Aura leaked a sigh in the living room.

"…I am thirsty. Guess I will have some water."

Aura suddenly felt thirsty and wanted to drink a cup of water before returning to the bedroom.

She went over to the five-door refrigerator in the corner of the living room and took a water jug out of it.

"Fuh"

Pouring the water from the jug into a glass, she emptied the glass in one go, then conversed with herself in the dimly lit room.

"I see… Zenjirou does not even take notice of Octavia-dono or the waiting maids."

Aura unconsciously embraced her own body with her arms.

Tonight again, Zenjirou had caressed this body numerous times. She still felt the touch of his fingers or lips all over her body and had first-hand experience of how passionately the man called Zenjirou sought a woman.

Yet, that very man paid no attention to other women besides her.

"Fuh… Fufufuh."

Aura involuntarily started to laugh. How should she name this feeling?

She never expected that being loved by someone of the opposite sex would be so pleasant.

An exhilaration different from the satisfaction of the government affairs as a royalty or the ecstasy from winning a battle as a general, was filling up her body from within.

To say it in an offensive way, it was a “sense of superiority”. The joy of having a particular man fawning only over herself. The pleasure of being recognized as the best woman.

“Not good. I kind of want to have him all to myself now.”

If she were to give in to this emotion, she would reflexively oppose a concubine on an emotional level when it was time for Zenjirou to welcome one.

Aura couldn’t conceal how bewildered she was about not having her emotions under control. And it was even more surprising that her rampant emotions were pleasant for her.

“Oh well. No need to worry about the future now.”

She shook her head, then turned off the LED lamp and fumbled for the door to the bedroom.

Back in the bedroom, she undressed and nestled her voluptuous, naked brown body up to the back of the soundly sleeping Zenjirou.

“Fufufu”

Aura clung to Zenjirou’s back so that her naked breasts pressed onto it.

“…Mm.”

Zenjirou’s back wasn’t especially broad for a man’s, but Aura felt a strange comfort from it. It gave her a calm feeling of “having returned home”.

In fact, it didn’t take long for Aura to fall asleep with that peace of mind while she clung to Zenjirou’s back like that.

* * *

A few days after Zenjirou started to take lessons from Octavia.

After he had sent off his beloved wife leaving for her job just now, Zenjirou used the spare time until his lesson with Octavia efficiently on the computer.

The video playing on the computer showed a lecture about manners and education that Zenjirou created with the help of Aura for himself.

It was problem how the “soul of words” didn’t work on voices recorded with the digital camera, but thinking about it, it was extremely simple to resolve.

He just had to slowly repeat Aura’s explanation in Japanese then and there.

“Cuando te inviten a un baile, el compañero para el primer y último baile…”

“Let’s see, when invited to a dance party, the partner for the first and last dance…”

He could hear his own voice speaking in Japanese a bit delayed after Aura’s voice speaking in the local language from the video playing on the computer.

It was irksome to hear his recorded voice, but it was quite beneficial without a doubt. He simply had to ignore the discomfort.

When he studied manners and education on the computer like that, there was a knock on the door.

“Excuse me, Zenjirou-sama. Octavia-sama has arrived.”

“Yes, I’ll be right there.”

On the waiting maid’s proclamation, Zenjirou turned off the computer and stood up.

He had various accurate timepieces in his computer, wristwatch or cell phone, but there was no point in being punctual as he was the only one aware of a minutely time.

“Okay, time to go.”

Zenjirou opened the door and went out into the hallway. There, the acquainted waiting maid with the blonde hair lowered her head politely.

At first he had been bewildered by the attendants's courteous behaviour, but now he had somewhat gotten used to it.

"Well done. You can clean the room now."

"Yes, certainly."

As the waiting maids were considerate to Zenjirou and avoided to enter the room as much as possible, he regarded them as "staff from a hotel" and kept an appropriate distance.

His way of speaking and behaviour was a bit awkward as a royalty, but the mental burden was too much for him to keep up an affected conduct in the inner palace, which was supposed to be his "home".

Luckily, the attendants in the inner palace were strictly selected by Aura and could be trusted to keep their mouth shut, so it was no problem when he relaxed his behaviour a bit.

(I reviewed the stuff from yesterday, so I would like to finish the lesson about manners and common sense in the morning. Then I've got the whole afternoon for magic lessons. Right, and since we've got more than three hours of midday break, I'll review and prepare the magic lessons if Aura comes over, then I should make some progress in lessons in the afternoon, too)

While efficiently scheduling his day like that, Zenjirou walked down the hallway in the inner palace.

Using his spare time to review as to speed up his lessons. And he aimed for even more efficiency by preparing for his magic lesson in the afternoon during the midday break.

The values he had cultivated in the past twenty-four years made "diligence" and "studiousness" a virtue and weren't so easy to override at this point.

Zenjirou thoroughly made plans to "accomplish his given task as efficiently as possible" as if he had forgotten that he had volunteered to be a sponger.

While Zenjirou was receiving lessons from Octavia, the waiting maids cleaned the living room and bedroom.

As attendants in the palace, they were highly skilled as not to bring about any shame, but cleaning these rooms was somewhat different from the other rooms.

"Listen up. As a general rule, only dust off Zenjirou-sama's private belongings. Do not use water."

"Yes!"

An elegant middle-aged woman, apparently in charge of all the cleaning maids, gave orders, to which the young waiting maids replied vigorous.

It was impossible to teach all the cleaning maids how to handle the electronic appliances in detail. Realizing that, Zenjirou had told the waiting maids "Dusting it off will suffice. Don't use water" in advance.

Actually damp wiping was only dangerous for a part of his belongings, the electronic appliances, but he concluded that it would be faster to do it himself instead of pointing out every single appliance to the waiting maids.

The middle-aged maid watched over the entire activities while working herself, too. She gave a group of three young waiting maids, who seemed to clean briskly, a glare and called out to them in a loud voice.

"Hey! How many of you does it take to clean just in front of the table!? One of you is enough. Otherwise we will never finish here!"

The three waiting maids, who were carefully cleaning the table with the computer, winced on the scolding from the middle-aged maid.

It was the place, where had Zenjirou sat earlier. In other words, the spot with the turned-on fan and remaining block of ice.

A new block was already in the making in a metal basin inside the freezer compartment. It would be ready when Zenjirou returned for the midday break.

Due to that, Zenjirou allowed the waiting maids to do whatever they wanted with the leftover ice.

Additionally, he also allowed them to use the chilled towels in the refrigerator as long as they as kept it in moderation.

The reason the waiting maids frequently wiped their sweat was to keep a hygienic environment for Zenjirou, too.

“Although Zenjirou-sama has yielded the remaining ice to us, that only applies to when we have properly finished our job. It is inexcusable to refresh yourself during work with the tools of your Master.”

The middle-aged maid said that, then merciless opened the window shutter of the room.

At once, a hot wind entered the room through the window.

“Kya!?”

“No, just a bit longer.”

“Aww, the ice~ My ice is melting…”

The three waiting maids, who had fully enjoying the cold breeze by pretending to clean just now, grieved and moaned in an exaggerated manner.

Even while the morning was relatively comfortable, it still were temperatures over thirty degree.

The middle-aged maid pressed her hands into her hips, which had put on an appropriate weight for her age, and flared up at the three moaning waiting maids.

“Stop messing around. You cannot see if it is dirty without the sunlight. Turn off the floor lamps. You know how, right?”

The young waiting maids gloomily resumed their work as the middle-aged maid’s words left no room for discussion.

“Yes~”

“Then I will go clean the floor over there.”

“Auh~ The ice~ My dear ice…”

Watching the three troublemakers returning to work, the middle-aged maid made a sigh.

“Good grief, these girls. You take your eyes of them for a second and they slack off.”

When they were told to work in the inner palace, the maids had been stiff from nervousness at first, paying careful attention as not to invoke the wrath of their Master from a different world.

However, once they met him, the husband of the Queen turned out to be a Master so effortless that it was disappointing.

He wasn’t selfish and forgave most mistakes with a smile. To begin with, he rarely even called upon the waiting maids. Due to that, the young waiting maids became like this in less than a month.

Amongst them, the earlier three were especially “lax”, but the same worry could be extended to all the maids.

“How regrettable. To think this are waiting maids working in the honourable inner palace.”

The middle-aged maid grumbled to herself while skilfully wiping the leather couch with a cloth.

Once the cleaning in the living room was done, the bedroom came next.

“Uwah…”

“Today again, huh…”

“Ahahaha. Her Highness and Zenjirou-sama get along so well.”

Entering the bedroom, the waiting maids showed a twitching smirk on the daily-occurring smell from the bed.

The smell from the bed sheets and from yesterday’s nightclothes and underwear in the basket next to the bed, told the all too intimate tale how the Queen and her husband got along in this room yesterday as well.

“It is a good thing. At this rate, we can expect a heir in the near future.”

On the other hand, the middle-aged maid nodded satisfied while saying that.

It certainly was something to be happy about as a citizen of the Kingdom when the Queen and her husband got along well, but to the young waiting maids, who were kind of proud about their own beauty, it was a somewhat complicated feeling.

The maid clothes of the Carpa Kingdom they were wearing right now, were relatively skimpy compared to the ones of the northern continent from where they originated.

The bright blue skirt only extended to above their knees and the arms were completely sleeveless. The clothes weren’t made so sensual that it clearly exposed their busts or waistlines, but on the young waiting maids they looked quite charming nevertheless.

Despite that, the Master of these maids had not laid a single finger on them so far.

It would be one thing if he were indifferent to women, but every morning there was “evidence” in the bedroom that he spent passionate nights second to none with the Queen.

They didn’t desire to be a “mistress” to the husband of the Queen in particular, but their pride as a woman was hurt when he didn’t show any interest in them like that.

“Come on, we do not have much time. Let us finish this quickly. Change the sheets, get the dirty clothes to the laundry and sort and put away the cleaned clothes into the clothing box.”

“Yes.”

“Very well.”

“Fuh, the bedroom is a bit cooler…”

The bedroom was smaller than the living room and there were less things to do. Even including laundry and changing the sheets, the cleaning of the bedroom didn’t even took half of the time of the living room.

The waiting maids carried out their own task in an accustomed manner.

* * *

Afternoon of the same day.

After finishing his “common sense and manner lesson” as well as lunch with Lady Octavia today again, Zenjirou relaxed together with Aura in the living room of the inner palace, which had been cleaned neatly in the morning.

It was still midday, so their glasses weren’t filled with alcohol, but with a squeezed juice of fruits with ice.

To relieve the fatigue from his lesson or her government duties, Zenjirou and Aura were cuddled together on the couch and watched television.

The sound from the TV was obviously Japanese and since the soul of words didn’t work, Aura had no way to understand it, but the sound wasn’t relevant for what they were watching right now.

After looking at the screen in silence for a while, it was actually Aura, who raised a voice with “Oh, I know it!”.

“No way, again? Don’t say anything. Don’t you dare to spoil it!”

Beaten to the punch, Zenjirou raised a surprised voice in frustration, then he stared at the scenery picture on the screen with devouring eyes.

A part of the picture should be altered for a bit somewhere. The point of this game was to find that alteration at a set time, but so far, Aura won far more often than Zenjirou, who brought the game over, even though she played it for the first time.

Must be their difference in observation and concentration skills.

“Okay, I will not tell you. ……..The pink flower in the right corner sure is pretty.”

“WAAH! Aura, you meanie!”

Both of them assumed a relaxed expression, which they wouldn't show in public, while enjoying the game.

A little later. The TV and game had been turned off and the living room had become silent. Aura called out to Zenjirou next to her while holding a glass with ice water.

"So, how are your lessons progressing? Last night, you told me that you would soon get a passing grade for basic manners and common sense, right?"

Zenjirou nodded satisfied to Aura's question and replied.

"Yeah, for the time being, I got a passing this morning. Though it's only the bare minimum for not embarrassing myself in public."

"Oho, glad to hear. Then the afternoon lesson will be only about magic."

While Aura replied with a smile, she thought to herself.

Her husband was as diligent as ever. He himself didn't seem to be aware of it, but he took it for granted to achieve the best result within his power for a task given to him.

Aura had a few subordinators like that, too, but it was actually quite difficult to handle such people. They were pretty useful as they didn't lack in effort, but they were bad at expressing complaints, so they had the bad habit to work themselves to death on their own unless their superior allocated the work properly.

Zenjirou had no clue about his wife's inner struggle and answered with a smile.

"Yeah, right. So could you teach me a bit about magic while we've got the time? I think the greatest downside of magic was that it is extremely short-lived, right? I heard that the 'Bestowal Magic' from the Twin Kingdom and our 'Space-Time Magic' were the first to overcome that weakness, but does that mean that the Space-Time Magic, just like the name implies, can affect time, too, not just space?"

Her husband plunged right into preparing for his afternoon lesson, whereat Aura responded without hiding her wry smile.

"Hold your horses. Save the questions for your lesson. You are not with your teacher Octavia right now, but with your wife."

That Zenjirou received a passing grade for a bare minimum of manners and common sense meant that he could finally appear at official businesses or important social gatherings. He would become even busier from now on, but he wouldn't last for long if he continued to work that hard.

(Seems my hunch was right)

It was necessary that she kept an eye on her husband from now on when entrusting a task to him, so that he wouldn't "overexert himself on his own".

That was what Aura told herself to do.

"Ah, right. Yeah, you're absolutely right."

Of course all the matters about magic he had wanted to confirm during midday break slipped his mind as he narrowed his eyes to slits from the soft body of his beloved wife that pressed onto his right arm.

Sitting side by side, Aura snuggled her head onto his right shoulder and Zenjirou put his arm around her shoulder from behind, pulling her into an embrace.

The warmth they felt from embracing each other in thin clothes was quite pleasant. At some point, the royal couple fell silent, closed their eyes and immersed themselves in the comfortable embrace.

"SNORE…"

Before long, Zenjirou was making peaceful sleeping sounds.

"Oh, he fell asleep…"

The Queen noticed that he had fallen asleep, put her arm around the waist of her husband, who was sleeping soundly with a smile, and closed her eyes as well.

"….."

And then, both of them started to make sleeping sounds in an intimate embrace as to make good for their lack of sleep during the night.

Only a few days until the husband of the Queen, Zenjirou would make his debut into higher society. For now, he was still spending a peaceful time.

Extra Chapter: The Game Competition between the Waiting Maids and their Master

There were three waiting maids in the inner palace of the Carpa Kingdom, who were known by a slightly shameful nickname: “The three troublemakers”.

Of course they were proper maids of the inner palace, even when they were called troublemakers. It didn’t change the fact that they made it through a strict selection.

There were no problems with their loyalty towards royalty, their skills as maids or appearance.

But compared to the other waiting maids, they were just a little bit more honest to their own desires, got just a little bit more ahead of themselves and were just a little bit more spaced out and missed their superior’s instructions.

The supervisory maid Amanda raised her eyebrows to frown on every occasion, but they weren’t committing mistakes as grave as to warrant a layoff and their Master Zenjioru wasn’t bothered by it at all, so it was tolerated so far.

In a way, the three waiting maids might be the ones, who enjoyed a stress-free life in the current inner palace most of all.

However, even they weren’t completely good-for-nothings. They had just a little bit more wits and were just a little bit more undaunted than the average waiting maid.

And even with their dauntlessness and wits, they now encountered a situation, where they couldn’t help but turn pale in the face.

“UWAAH!? What do I do? What do I do? I’ve gone and done it now!”

A short waiting maid with black hair suddenly raised a piteous voice.

The present time was the long break issued only during the period of intense heat. Just when she had returned to her own room as to spend the break time there, she screamed that.

The rooms of the waiting maids in the inner palace were basically for three people and that trio usually worked together.

To make it easier to understand: These groups of three were roommates and close co-workers.

“Hey, what’s the matter, Fay? Don’t come in screaming all of the sudden.”

“What’s wrong, Fay-chan?”

The short waiting maid— Fay, breaking out a cold sweat on her dark brown face, slowly took out “that” from the pocket of her apron while her two roommates watched her.

“…What do I do with this? I ended taking it with me by mistake…”

Fay said. The thing she had taken out was a “flat, rectangle black object”.

“…..”

“…..”

For a while, the small room of the waiting maids was ruled by silence.

The first to break the silence was the taller one of her two roommates.

“W- Wa- Wait. That belongs to Zenjirou-sama, doesn’t it? The one he warned us about not to damp wipe or drop. W- Wh- What are you doing with it, Fay?”

It was understandable that the waiting maids were flurried.

The object in Fay's hand was a so-called "portable game console". Needless to say, it belonged to Zenjirou. The waiting maids weren't so clueless that they wouldn't know how grave it was to bring that into their own room.

"What now, Dolores…"

Tears dwelled up in Fay's big, black eyes and she beseeched her tall friend.

Even Fay, usually the most elated amongst the "three troublemakers", couldn't help but cry in this situation.

However, she had an excuse if she was allowed to speak up for herself.

Zenjirou always took lessons in manners and common sense from Lady Octavia until past noon, but for some reason, the lesson ended two hours earlier today and he had returned to the living room.

Apparently Lady Octavia been considerate of him due to the intense heat, claiming that he would have difficulties to concentrate anyway, but Fay didn't know the actual matter of things.

Either way, for Fay and the other cleaning maids it meant that their time limit for their job was cut short by two hours.

It was reasonable that they would unconsciously let out a scream.

Even so, they did everything in their might and somehow finished to clean the living room and bedroom before Zenjirou returned. With a sigh of relief, the waiting maids had then returned to their own rooms, where Fay had finally noticed it.

Thinking back on it, she certainly remembered "temporarily" putting that rectangle black thing in the pocket of her apron as she was wiping the table on which it had laid.

Nonetheless, the tall waiting maid— Dolores didn't have a good idea either, no matter how much Fay beseeched her.

"Even if you ask me… Your only choice is to return it before it gets out of hand."

Dolores had almond eyes, which were relatively rare for someone in the Carpa Kingdom, and these eyes were coloured with bewilderment and agitation while she answered with a faltering tone.

She made a sound argument without doubt.

During cleaning, Fay had taken a belonging of her Master to her room by mistake.

For a normal Master, that act would obviously be "theft" and reason for strict punishment. Just as Dolores had said, the longer she postponed to return it, the more of a problem it would become.

However, Fay remained teary and shook her head to that sound argument.

"Can't do. Right now, Zenjirou-sama is taking dinner together with her Highness in their room. I can't afford to disturb them now…"

Since Zenjirou always took his lunch in the same room in which he received lessons from Lady Octavia, it had been a while since he shared lunch with Aura.

He rarely ever issued any orders, but he had especially informed them "not to come into the room unless absolutely necessary", so it was a precious period for him.

If she were to go to apologize now, she might actually anger her Master instead. To begin with, she couldn't decide whether "returning her Master's belonging that she had taken with her by mistake" was an urgent business or not.

"Oh, I see. So that's going on. Well, then you can't do anything, I guess…"

"Aw, what should I do if Zenjirou-sama notices that it's gone during the break…"

By this world's standards, Zenjirou was abnormally generous. Going by that, he wouldn't punish her without hearing her explanation first, but one often tended to imagine things worse than they actually were at such times.

Fay vividly pictured herself getting punished for theft— having the tendon of her dominant hand cut— and getting thrown out of the inner palace.

“Hiii…!”

The other roommate called out to Fay, who was struck by her own vivid fantasy, consoling.

“Hey, Fay-chan, why don’t you ask Ines-sama for advice then?”

“Eh? Ines-sama?”

“Yeah, right. That sounds good.”

Fay looked up and Dolores looked down to the owner of that somewhat slow-paced voice.

Just like their actions implied, the height of the third girl, Rethe, ranged between Fay’s and Dolores’.

Compared to the short Fay or the tall Dolores, Rethe’s height didn’t stand out, but instead her chest stood out.

She had huge breasts. In cup-size, she might be even one size bigger than Queen Aura.

Fay was at a loss for words to the suggestion of the girl with these huge breasts and drooping eyes.

“Uh, th- that’s…”

“Well, doing as Rethe suggested is your safest choice.”

Dolores on the other hand agreed with the big-breasted girl— with Rethe even while she made a grim face.

They finally found a solution, but Fay’s expression didn’t brighten up.

“Yes, but, if I do that, Ines-sama will…!”

“Well, you will get a lecture for sure.”

“Good luck, Fay-chan.”

Fay trembled her short body, whereat Dolores shrugged the shoulders of her tall body and cold-heartedly pointed out the truth, whereas Rethe clenched her fist in front of her huge breasts and gave her encouraging words.

“Doloreees, Retheee…”

Both Dolores and Rethe averted her eyes from the pleading look of her co-worker.

It definitely was the best choice, albeit a slightly cruel one.

In charge of the cleaning department, Ines was a strict superior faithful to her job, but she deeply cared for her subordinators as well.

If Fay confessed and apologize quickly, Ines would definitely stand up for her, even when Zenjirou should accuse Fay of “theft”.

However, Fay definitely needed to be prepared for a long sermon before that.

“Auh…”

She must have realized that, too.

“…Okay. I’ll go over to Ines-sama for a bit…”

Making a brave, but tragic resolve, Fay wiped the tears that were about to spill out from her big, black eyes and trotted over to the door.

“…..”

“…..”

Dolores and Rethe looked at each other wordlessly as they watched that small back leaving.

If some stranger committed a mistake it was “somebody else’s problem”, but a friend they shared a room with and worked with, wasn’t “somebody else”.

“Fiine. We’ll go with you, so buck up a bit!”

“Ehehe, Fay-chan, cover for me as well when I ever make a mistake.”

Dolores and Rethe went after Fay, who was advancing by herself in a her tragic resolve, with quick steps.

* * *

As it turned out, their speculation about Ines' reaction was spot on, right down to the last detail.

After the sermon that roughly lasted for an hour, they were dismissed by Ines as she promised to put in a good word for Fay to Zenjirou and the three troublemakers returned to their own room while a relief ate its way through their tired expressions.

"Fuhiii…! That was so scary~!"

Fay had been lectured by Ines for nearly an hour, so she now leaked a long sigh of relief and dived into her bed.

"Well, you had a close shave. Now all you have to do is to return it to Zenjirou-sama once the break is over and apologize.

Ines-sama said she would smooth things over for you, so it shouldn't become a problem. All's well, wouldn't you say?"

Sitting on a simple wooden chair the wrong way round, Dolores held the back of the chair between her long legs and was rocking back and forth.

That feast was only possible because she had long arms and legs. If Fay were to sit on the chair like that, her legs definitely wouldn't reach the floor.

Well, even when Dolores' legs reached the floor, it didn't change the fact that sitting like that was bad manners.

Fray replied with a stifled voice as she had her face still plunged into her pillow, which was filled with wheat hulks.

"Yeah. It was scary, but I'm glad…! Now I can sleep in peace."

"Heaven forbid, this girl…"

As Fray was already getting ready to take a midday nap on the bed, Dolores raised a slightly weary voice.

"Oh, but maybe I should take a nap, too. I'm somewhat exhausted today."

But then she said that as she suddenly thought of it and threw a glance at her own bed.

The long break issued during this period wasn't just for show. During the day it was so hot that they sweated from every pore on their body, even if they just sat still in their room like this.

Taking a nap like Fray was the best method to preserve their physical strength.

"Rethe, what about you? Will you take a nap, too?"

Dolores turned her heard towards her other roommate. At that very moment.

An unfamiliar sound suddenly resounded loudly in the room.

"Hey, Rethe!? Wh- What're you doing!?"

Dolores shouted angrily and red-faced.

"Fueh? What was that sound?"

Fay woke up from the unknown and strange noise and only lifted her face from the bed.

"Eh? Huh?"

Both of them looked at Rethe, who tilted her head puzzled as she held the collapsible portable game console opened in her hands.

"H- He- Hey, Rethe! What're you doing there!"

"Retheee! I just got that long lecture over with, so don't cause more problems…!"

The screams of Dolores and Fay resounded in the small shared room of the three waiting maids.

“Ah, hahaha…”

On the other hand, the person in question, Rethe, laughed kind of easygoing, as she didn’t realize the severeness of her action.

The black game console in Rethe’s hands displayed a colourful image on the two-part display and played a tuneful music unknown to the different world.

“Somehow, it seems to have started working when I opened it… Ehe~”

“W- Wh- What now!”

“Hiii, we’re done for! There’ll be no mercy this time!”

Dolores and Fay were greatly perplexed, but Rethe actually hadn’t done something so dramatic.

She had merely opened the collapsible game console.

A game console of that type automatically went into a “sleep mode” when you collapsed it during the game.

Most likely, its owner, Zenjirou, hadn’t bothered to turn it off and merely put it into that sleep mode.

As Dolores and Fay didn’t know that, it only appeared like Rethe had started up the tool wilfully.

Giving her two panicking roommates a sidelong glance, Rethe, the cause for their panic, noticed that a paper had been plucked inside the game console and tilted her head.

“Oh? What’s this? Dragonskin parchment?”

It was a copy paper that had been folded four times.

“Hey, Rethe. Don’t carelessly touch it any more…!”

“I know nothing! I’m no longer responsible! I’m shifting the blame to Rethe! I’m just in the wrong place at the wrong time! Just a henchman!”

Rethe seemed to completely ignore the ruckus from Dolores and Fay, spreading the folded paper and looking at it.

Even if she made a blank facial expression, Rethe was still a waiting maid of the inner palace, so she had no trouble with reading and writing.

“This isn’t Her Highness’ handwriting. Could it be from Zenjirou-sama? Let’s see… Instructions for use… Gameplay?”

“Eh, what?”

“Gameplay? What does that mean?”

As their curiosity temporarily prevailed over their dismay, Fay and Dolores peeked onto the paper in Rethe’s hand from at an angle behind her.

“I don’t quite get it, but it says how to use this? No, how to play it, I think.”

“…Oho.”

“Zenjirou-sama wrote this? So he already learned our language.”

To begin with, they had a “lax” personality, labelled as the “three troublemakers” by their superior.

Shortly after, the three waiting maids were reading the “gameplay” for the portable game console in silence.

* * *

One hour later.

“Fay-chan, on the right. There’s a red one on the right, delete it!”

“Don’t do it, Fay. You won’t get a chain that way. Put that red one on the top at the side!”

“Aw, shut up! I’m playing right now, so stop butting in!”

The three maids were totally hooked on the game console.

The three of them sat next to each other on the simple wooden bed while Dolores and Rethe noisily called upon Fay, who sat in the middle with the game console, from the left and right.

Currently they were playing a game of the so-called “drop down” style.

It was a relatively simple puzzle game, where the player had to navigate blocks, jewels or slime-like creatures that were falling downwards from the top of the long, vertical screen, into a specified order to erase them.

One of the reasons Fay and the others got “hooked”, too, was that the game console contained this “drop down” game.

If it had been a RPG (Role-playing game) or SLG (Simulation game), where they couldn’t read the displayed words, their game adventure would have ended with just enjoying some pretty pictures and strange music.

Either way, this was an incredible synergy of coincidences.

If Fay hadn’t taken the game console with her by mistake.

If Rethe hadn’t been so curious to open the game console.

If Zenjirou hadn’t put in the “manual” he had been asked to write in the local language a few days ago by Aura.

The current situation wouldn’t have occurred when one of these “ifs” had not been applicable.

“Yay~ Killed the skeleton!”

“Kyaah, you’re good, Fay-chan.”

“Oh please, Fay. You only defeated it now? I already beat it twice. Fufu.”

“Ah, what’re you boasting for, Dolores!? Fine, just watch. I’ll surpass you in no time!”

The three waiting maids, who had gotten their hands on the game console and instruction manual in a series of coincidences, completely immersed themselves in the unknown pleasure of games, true to their nickname “the three troublemakers”.

The midday break of the following day.

Just like yesterday, the three troublemakers had gotten their hands on the black game console while they relaxed in their room.

One difference to yesterday, though, was that there was a tag saying “free to borrow” stuck on top of that portable game console.

Furthermore, a reading table for the Arabic numerals and the names of the three troublemakers in the Latin alphabet were written on the copy paper with the instruction manual.

Lastly, the high score listed the name “Zenjirou”, as he apparently played it himself last night. It was an obvious “challenge” towards the troublemaker group.

“Fufufu, how amusing. Very well, I will accept the challenge from Zenjirou-sama!”

Fay spun her arm around and laughed belligerent.

“Hey… Aren’t you being a bit disrespectful towards Zenjirou-sama by saying that? Well, I agree, though, since it seems interesting.”

Even while Dolores retorted to Fay with an astonished tone, her face showed the same kind of smile like Fay’s.

“Ufufu, it’s going to be fun. Let’s me in, too.”

And then, Rethe clapped her hands together excitedly and threw out her huge chest while keeping a easygoing smile on her face.

Thus, three novice gamers emerged in the different world.

* * *

A few days later.

The game tournament of the three troublemakers had continued during each break without fail.

In the morning, they did their jobs and shortly before the break, they took the game console with the “free to borrow” tag and gathered in their room.

During the break then, they went crazy on the game and after the break, they returned the game console to the living room.

A certain day after numerous such cycles.

“Yay! I did it! I finally did it!”

Usually, Dolores was the calmest amongst the three, but she now lifted up her tightly clenched fist numerous times and shouted triumphant.

“Aww! Dolores beat me to it!”

“Wah, congrats. You’re great, Dolores-chan.”

Fay flapped her arms and legs on the bed in frustration, whereas Rethe congratulated Dolores on her success with an applause.

Dolores showy pointed the game console, where she had just set a new high score, at her different reacting roommates, puffed up a bit with pride.

As tall as Dolores was, Fay and Rethe had no way to see the screen when she held it up like that, but she seemed so excited that she forgot such a simple fact.

“Fufu, look. I’ve done it. I finally did it!”

Dolores’ name twinkled brilliant in the high score ranking.

The name “Zenjirou”, which they hadn’t been able to overtake so far, had dropped below it.

It could be considered rather “quick” that she overtook the score of the owner in a few days, but to Dolores it felt like an “at long last”.

“Hand it over, Dolores! I’m next!”

Fay seized Dolores, who still held up the game console proudly, at the waist and shook her violently while puffing up her small cheeks.

“I get it, I get it, so get off me, Fay. Just do your best if you think you can overtake me, fufu. I’ll take on anyone, anytime.”

“Uwah, the giant’s becoming arrogant… Damn it, I’ll have the last laugh over you!”

Fay glared at Dolores, who sat on the edge of the bed and crossed her legs affected, with half-closed eyes and challenged the game belligerent while exposing her healthy, pure-white teeth.

“Ugg! This.can’t.be!”

“Oh well, too bad, Fay-chan.”

“Well, as expected, I guess. That’s just the difference between you and me.”

In the end however, Dolores was the only one, who managed to overtake Zenjirou’s score on that day.

* * *

The following day.

Fay had been fired up since morning.

“Hmp! I’ll definitely show you what I’m made of!”

She moved around restlessly like a waltzing mouse and emitted a fighting spirit that gave you the illusion that her short, black hair bristled up, squaring her small shoulders to the limit.

“Fay. It’s all fine that you’re motivated, but it comes to nothing when it obstructs your work. If you skimp on it, you’ll spend your break time training instead.”

The head of the cleaning department, Ines, warned her subordinator for her abnormal high spirit with a sigh.

“Yes, I understand!”

But even these threatening words couldn’t affect the motivated, short girl

“Good grief, this girl…”

Ines stopped her hands from working and made an exaggerated sigh.

Of course, Ines, too, had noticed that the “three troublemakers” had taken Zenjirou’s game from the living room with them and become absorbed in it on a daily basis.

Since Zenjirou had personally given his consent for borrowing it, Ines had no intention to criticize them, but she would show no mercy if that “game” were to interfere with their duties.

Still, for now it seemed that the enthusiasm for that “game” had a positive influence on them.

If they could finish their work faster, their break time would get accordingly longer. It was a trivial merit as this world lacked an accurate measuring of time.

As there were no clocks in this world, one usually wouldn’t even notice when the break time was extended by five or ten minutes, but for Fay and the others it was different, since they were currently hooked on the game.

Five or ten minutes were enough to play one more round of the drop down game.

“Okay, done wiping the couch! Next is the table!”

Fay’s motivation was the same as the one from a grad schooler, who was told “You can play games until dinner once you’ve finished your homework” by their mother.

It was in Zenjirou’s interest as well when they got hooked on this so much.

Fay washed the dirty dust cloth in the water bucket and searched for the so beloved “portable game console” that should be on the table before wiping it.

Ever since Fay had taken it with her by mistake, Zenjirou had always placed it visible on this table.

And just as she had hoped, the black console lay on top of the thick table today as well.

But it was a bit different today.

Next to the usual black game console was a small case she had never seen before.

“Mhh? What’s this?”

Different from cloth or dragonskin, the small case was smooth and shiny.

This small case with colourful polka dots on a white background, undoubtedly belonged to Zenjirou.

It goes without saying that such an object, made out of unknown material, was one of the things that Zenjirou had brought with him.

The case was so small that it perfectly fit into Fay’s small hands and when she picked it up, it made clattering sounds.

Judging by the sensation of it, she speculated that the case was filled with a lot of small, hard objects like dried beans.

Needless to say, she simply would have put it back into place with care as it was the private property of Zenjirou, placed there by pure chance.

The problem was that the case had the same yellow tag as the game console.

“Prize for setting a new high score”

That was written on the tag with a neat, yet somewhat awkward handwriting.

* * *

“So, you brought this along, too.”

“Yep. Here, you set the new high score. I officially handed it over now.”

“Mm, good job. You have my thanks.”

“Uwah… Again so arrogant, you giant…”

Midday break of the same day.

Fay had brought over the mysterious “prize” from the living room along with the game console and obediently handed over that prize to the rightful winner, Dolores, even while she wore a sour look that displayed her displeasure on her whole face.

“Oho, I wonder what is it? Hey, Dolores-chan, open it!”

“I get it, so back off, Rethe. C’mon, get away. I’ll open it now.”

Dolores sat down on the edge of the bed and tried to open the unknown case in a cautious manner while Rethe and Fay watched her.

However, it was unclear to someone from the different world how to open the completely sealed cased.

“Ehm, huh? How do I open this?”

“What? You can’t open it? Show it to me.”

“It won’t open, Dolores-chan? Should I go fetch a knife?”

“Mm… No, it’s okay. It seems to open on this end.”

The cased opened by vertically detaching a part on one end from Dolores careful handling. She then slowly poured the contents onto a handkerchief.

Red, blue, yellow, green. “Smarties” in all kind of colours rolled over the white handkerchief.

“Okay, what’s this?”

“Food, I think? It smells kind of sweet.”

“Hard and sweet food… Candies?”

The three waiting maids put their heads together and speculated.

The Carpa Kingdom produced brown sugar in large quantities, so candies were a relatively common semiluxury food.

From what they knew, the smarties looked like candies to them.

Dolores kept an eye on the smarties on top of the white handkerchief and mused for a while.

The “prize” was given to her by her Master. There was no way that eating them would harm her. However, she certainly was a bit hesitant to put something completely unknown into her mouth unwarily.

“Well, it might be my prize, but it wouldn’t be very mature to hog it all to myself. Here.”

Dolores handed Fay and Rethe each three smarties under such a pretext.

“Fufufu, how rare for you to be so considerate, Dolores.”

“Yay, thanks, Dolores-chan!”

The simple-minded Fay and the innocent Rethe accepted Dolores’ “good-will” without any doubt.

“Well then, let’s eat the first one together on the count of three. 1… 2… 3!”

“Nom!”

“Mm”

(Okay, seems safe)

Dolores confirmed with a side-glance to Fay and Rethe as they threw the smarties into their mouths that they weren’t screwing up their faces pained, then quickly ate her own smartie.

“…”

“…Mm, it’s sweet.”

“Yeah. It’s candy after all.”

As they were under the prejudice that it was “candy”, the three of them were fiddling with the smarties in their mouths without scrunching them. But even with candies, some people sucked them until the very end, whereas others quickly scrunched them.

Dolores and Rethe belonged to the former while Fay was a classic example for the latter.

“Mm… Mm! Mh!?”

“What’s up, Fay?”

“Fay-chan?”

Fay had big eyes to begin with, but she suddenly widened them even more, looking like they would pop out of her head. Dolores and Rethe called out to her while still sucking on their smarties.

“…These aren’t candies! It breaks so easily and inside is a completely different sweet! It’s so sweet… Yeah, so good!”

Finishing the smartie off before the others, Fay flapped her small hands and described that unknown flavour with words.

“Oh, not? Let’s see… Mm?”

“…You’re right. This is really good.”

After Fay, Dolores and Rethe scrunched the smarties in their mouths, too.

As the outside was a kind of sugar-coated sweet, the girls were already familiar with that taste, but the filling of chocolate was an unknown flavour in the Carpa Kingdom.

“It… tastes a bit bitter. But it gives it an highlight all the more.”

Fay and Rethe tilted their heads to Dolores’ impressed evaluation.

“Eh, it’s sweet!”

“Yeah, sweet. You sure your tongue is alright?”

“Aw, geez. It was foolish of me to try to discuss fine flavours with you.”

Their opinions clashed, but all of them seemed to agree that the unknown sweet had a captivating flavour.

Fay in particular sparkled her big, black eyes after she ate up her three pieces in no time, and directed a poor coaxing voice at her tall roommate.

“Hey, Dolores? I would like to ask you something~”

“I’m not giving you any more.”

Dolores discerned the intention of her short roommate right away, quickly wrapped up the handkerchief with the smarties and hid it behind her back.

“Dolorees~ Don’t be a meanie, okay?”

“Nope.”

“Pretty.please.with.sugar.on.top.”

“No means no.”

“…Argh, what a pain! Then I’ll take them by force!”

“Laughable! You think I would flinch from someone like you!”

Fay lost her temper as her begging didn’t work at all and she attacked with her agile and cat-like body, but Dolores countered by giving her a front kick while remaining seated on the bed.

“UGH!?”

Receiving a good kick to the chin, Fay tumbled to the floor.

Her reflexes and agility weren’t to be scoffed at, but her shorter reach simply made it impossible.

As they were wearing miniskirts, the scuffle between them slipped their clothes out of position, not fit to show it to any man.

But it was nothing but a trifle to them right now.

Fay straightened herself on the floor and raised a hissing voice like a cat while she was still on all fours. Dolores, too, got into a battle position by dangling her legs from the bed, ready to launch a kick at any time.

“HISS!”

“Have a go at it!”

When Fay intimidated her from the floor, Dolores got ready to counter attack from the bed.

But luckily enough, the situation didn’t escalate any further.

“Fay-chan, Dolores-chan, Ines-sama will hear you if you make too much ruckus here.”

Rethe’s words extinguished their fighting spirit as if pouring cold water over them.

Her tone was as easygoing as ever and her words sharply pointed out reality.

The present time was the midday break. Fay and her roommates weren’t the only ones taking a rest in their room. The head of the cleaning department, Ines, should be napping in her own room, too.

Contrary to her usual nit-picking, Ines was surprisingly soft on her subordinators, but even that tolerance had its limit.

Although they were in their own room, their superior would give them a good old sermon with furious eyes if they were to make a ruckus so loud that it could be heard in the hallway.

Fay wanted to avoid that, so she reluctantly pulled back.

“O- Okay, fine. Since you stubbornly insist on it, I’ll be so kind as to let you have it out of consideration for Rethe.”

“Let me have it? Don’t make me laugh! This is mine! It belongs to me! Why are you playing the indulgent one!”

Dolores expressed her justified anger from atop the bed, but Fay was lost in greed, so it didn’t get through to her at all.

“Hmpf, forget it. I don’t need any pity from someone as stingy as you. I’ll soon set a new high score, too, and get something from Zenjirou-sama!”

Zenjirou hadn’t said anything about “giving a prize every time a new high score was set”, but Fay interpreted in her own favour and her target apparently shifted from the “smarties in Dolores’ hands” to the “stock of smarties near Zenjirou”.

Snatching away the game console right away, Fay sat down on her bed and turned the console on with a serious expression she never showed during work.

“Fufu, just you wait! I‘m changing my ways from today on!”

“Oh, right. So far, you always deleted the dropping ones right away.”

“Hey, Fay! You’re obviously aiming for chains!! Didn’t you say that you wouldn’t resort to such cheap tricks!?”

“Pft, who said something so stupid? I’ll do everything in my might to win! That’s my justice!”

“It was you! These words came from none other than you! Your attitude completely changes when things are at stake!”

“Fay-chan, Dolores-chan, you’re being too loud. Ine-sama will get angry!”

Sometimes clamorous, sometimes harmonic. Amidst this noisy, but heart-warming tumult, Fay declared the end of her first game round.

“Great, a new personal record! That’s a good omen.”

It must have been a satisfying result in itself, as Fay showed a bright smile.

However, her smile froze as soon as the high score ranking was shown.

“…What’s this?”

Yesterday, Dolores had definitely beaten Zenjirou’s record, albeit by just a bit.

Yet, the name at the top read “Zenjirou” again now.

Needless to say, she wasn’t seeing an illusion. As proof of it, Dolores’ record from yesterday was listed on the second row, with another “Zenjirou” below it.

In other words, Zenjirou had played it last night and taken over Dolores’ high score. Moreover,

“Wow, it’s more than twice the score from Dolores…”

“Wait, let me get this right. That means we won’t get a ‘prize’ unless we overtake this new high score from Zenjirou-sama?”

“Seems that way…yeah.”

As the waiting maids comprehended the circumstances, a silence spread between them for a while. However, it didn’t last for long.

“So mean of Zenjirou-sama! How could he! So childish!”

Fay screamed in critique.

“Well, if you think about it, it IS his game. He must have held back on the previous score.”

Dolores made a wise sigh.

“Phew, now that‘s a mind-blowing score…”

And Rethe gave an easy-going opinion with an ellipsis ending.

The room soon was overflowing with clamour that even drove out the intense heat of this season.